

THE
HISTORY OF TIBET

The Modern Period: 1895-1959
The Encounter with Modernity

Edited by
ALEX MCKAY

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Volume III
The Modern Period: 1895–1959
The Encounter with Modernity

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INTRODUCTION

The 13th Dalai Lama, Ngawang Lobsang Tubten Gyatso, was installed as the ruler of Tibet in September 1895. Born to a peasant family from the Dagpo region of south-eastern Tibet in May 1876, he had been confirmed as the reincarnation of his late predecessor by the Regent, Taksta Rinpoche, in 1877. His enthronement in the Potala palace took place in 1879, apparently after the Manchu Emperor had confirmed the choice, although the selection had been made without reference to the 'golden urn' lottery system.¹ During the years 1879–95, while the young Tubten Gyatso trained as a Gelugpa monk, Taksta Rinpoche acted as Tibet's Regent until his death in 1886, when he was succeeded by Demo Rinpoche.

The 13th Dalai Lama came to power at a time when dynamic external forces were challenging Asian social institutions and political structures. During the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, the multi-dimensional impact of the introduction of Western modernity produced fundamental changes in the social, political and ideological structures of Asian society. In North India, China, Japan and smaller polities such as the Central Asian and Himalayan states, long-established political systems were radically transformed by the encounter with Western imperial forces. New power structures, elites and ideologies emerged to challenge and replace the established order, producing new social alliances, political frontiers and concepts of nation and statehood. The collapse of centuries-old Asian ruling dynasties meant that an era of relatively stable (though by no means static) geo-political and social systems gave way to a period of change and turmoil. After a century in which Tibet had sought, with Chinese support, to remain isolated from Western influence, the ascension of the 13th Dalai Lama marked the beginning of a new era in which Tibet was forced to confront these different realities.

During the nineteenth century, the imperial powers increasingly dominated China, while the Manchu dynasty's control and influence over its outlying dominions declined. Historians of Tibet have tended to neglect this period, but it does appear that by 1895, despite the lingering presence of the Manchu Ambans in Lhasa, Tibet was for all practical purposes an autonomous region acknowledging Chinese authority purely at the symbolic level. That level was not, however, without significant meaning in Asian political thought. Ritual acknowledgement of sovereignty was a critical traditional indicator of political status, with direct intervention by the superior power generally limited to periods of internal crisis in, or external threat to, the tributary state.

The symbolic overlordship of China was not necessarily antithetical to Tibetan interests at that point, as Tibet faced the instability and potentially threatening forces beyond its borders. To the south, Tibet shared a frontier of more than 2,000 miles with what appeared to Lhasa to be an aggressively expanding British empire. By 1895,

the imperial government of India had gained a controlling influence over the Himalayan Buddhist states of Ladakh, Sikkim and Bhutan, and was in an apparent alliance with Nepal, traditionally a hostile neighbour to Tibet. Tibet could hope that China's status was sufficient to deter any British advance across the Himalayas.

To the east of Tibet, however, the decline of the Chinese empire was clearly manifest in the increasingly unstable socio-political conditions. Symbolic acknowledgement of the Emperor's authority cloaked effective autonomy not only in Tibet, but also in Sichuan and Yunnan, where power had largely devolved to diverse military units. To the north-east of Tibet lay an ally, Mongolia, similarly under nominal Manchu suzerainty, but virtually a religious satellite of Lhasa and ruled over by a Tibetan-born Gelugpa incarnation. By the 1890s, however, Mongolia was a weakened and moribund state whose support was of little value.

Apart from China, only two nations appeared as potential allies strong enough to offer Tibet any real support in maintaining its position. Both, however, were located well beyond her immediate frontiers. To the north, behind Mongolia and the Islamic regions of Central Asia then devastated by warlords and bandits, lay Tsarist Russia. The Tsar was known to rule relatively benignly over substantial communities of Kalmyk and Buryat Buddhist followers of the Tibetan creed and could thus be envisaged as a potential ally of Tibet. To the east of China was Japan, known to Tibet as a Buddhist nation powerful enough to have defeated Chinese forces in 1894-5. Tibet, however, had no formal ties with either nation. Its ability to attract political support and its power to influence events was thus extremely limited, and Tibet's prospects for a stable and independent existence seemed bleak.

Yet when the 13th Dalai Lama 'passed to the heavenly fields' in 1933, Tibet as both a political and a cultural unit had survived, and even prospered. It had gained effective independence from China and established close ties with the British Indian empire (consequently reducing any threat from Nepal). Soviet Russia posed no immediate threat and while interstate ties had not developed, a handful of individual Japanese travellers had been permitted to study or work in Lhasa. Tibet's monastic system had been preserved and modernity had had little obvious impact outside Lhasa and the route to British India.

Tibet was something of an island of stability in the region, for in stark contrast to their political and diplomatic progress, the ruling dynasties and structures of Tibet's northern and eastern neighbours had collapsed. Russia, China and Mongolia had all undergone revolutions and while Soviet Russia had re-emerged in firm control of much of Mongolia and Central Asia, Republican China remained weak and unstable.

Despite being twice forced into exile, having no significant military or economic power at his disposal and with his authority inside Tibet itself subject to numerous limits and even occasional challenge, the 13th Dalai Lama had none the less managed to establish his rule over a Tibet entirely free of Chinese control. He also presided over a society that, for all its faults, avoided the extremes of inequality, violence and famine that ravaged Tibet's larger neighbours. We need not look too far into our sources to find corruption, injustice and inequality in Tibetan society, but these are universal qualities, present in all human societies. By contemporary and modern Western social standards, Tibetan society, not least in such matters as the relatively high status of women and the abolition of the death penalty,² could be compared favourably with most of the outside world.³

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In terms of both achievement and humanity, therefore, the 13th Dalai Lama must be regarded as among the greatest political leaders of his era. He enjoyed, as all successful leaders must, a measure of good fortune in regard to circumstance (which in the Tibetan understanding is an aspect of an individual's character rather than a matter of chance). But he also displayed qualities of leadership and outstanding political and diplomatic skills, not least the readiness to change course and alliance when necessary to further Tibetan interests. He clearly understood that in politics there are no long-term friends, only long-term interests.

This assessment of the 13th Dalai Lama does not negate contemporary Western scholarship that contests the pyramidal model of power in Tibet and emphasizes the historical restrictions on, and diffused and intermittent nature of a Dalai Lama's rule (an issue that will be discussed in more detail later). The power of the 13th Dalai Lama, particularly in the decade after 1913, was exceptional, and for that brief period he enjoyed a greater degree of independent authority than had any of his predecessors.

But the Tibetan system was dominated by (and essentially served the interests of), a conservative patriarchal elite made up of the land-owning aristocracy and the leaders of the major Gelugpa monasteries. Strongly resistant to change, these forces were powerful enough to influence the Dalai Lama to halt the measured response to modernity he had initiated in the post-1913 period. From narrow self-interest and a pious disregard for outside forces, they prevented the formation of bodies of knowledge, the development of identities and forces of arms, and the despatch of diplomatic undertakings which would have strengthened, and indeed constructed, a unified Tibetan state in the modern sense. In the mid-1920s, the modernization of Tibet largely ceased at state level, with the result that Tibet failed to establish either an independent identity on the world stage or a military force sufficiently well-trained and equipped to at least use its terrain to seriously delay a Chinese army. With hoped-for Russian assistance never eventuating, and the British empire withdrawing from South Asia without diplomatic recognition of Tibet as an independent nation despite decades of dealing with it on just that basis, Tibet's separate status survived for just seventeen years after the death of the 'Great Thirteenth'. His rule was, therefore, something of a false dawn.

* * *

In this volume we are concerned with the history of Tibet in the period from the ascension to power of the 13th Dalai Lama in 1895 until the flight into Indian exile of the young 14th Dalai Lama in 1959. Thus much of the focus is on the 13th Dalai Lama, his aims, ideas, status and actions. We examine the internal and external forces that shaped Tibet during his lifetime, and the legacy of decisions taken during his rule. In that regard we highlight the thesis, fully developed by Melvyn Goldstein, that largely attributes the blame for Tibet's loss of freedom to its conservative monastic forces. This thesis can obscure the simple fact that Tibet was invaded, conquered and subsequently oppressed by Han Chinese imperialism. But the question of Tibetan agency should not be ignored, and the forces within Tibet that looked to China, whether to protect Tibetan Buddhism or simply to preserve their own privileges, cannot entirely escape the blame for her fate.

Tibet's history during the period under consideration was shaped by its encounter with the forces of imperialism and modernity. Thus we examine how Tibet was affected by being drawn into the Anglo-Russian struggle in Central Asia that became known in the West as the 'Great Game'. We also consider the process of modernization upon which Tibet embarked after 1912–13 and examine the causes of its virtual abandonment a decade later. Much of the focus is on the events and often blurred identities in eastern Tibet, the interface between Tibetan and Chinese civilizations and an area of dynamic agency throughout this period.

We conclude this volume by addressing the issue of how Tibet has been constructed by the West. We are concerned with both academic and political constructs and in particular the image of Tibet as 'Shangri-La', the 'Mythos Tibet' of Western projection and fantasy. Our concern is not with self-reflection, but with the manner in which our knowledge of Tibet has taken form. The aim of this analysis is to provide future scholarship with an understanding of how our images, our sources and our findings have been effected by the 'Shangri-La' and other constructions.

* * *

The popular image of monastic sanctity does not reflect the realities of religio-political power. Considerable intrigue surrounded the court of the young 13th Dalai Lama, whose four predecessors had all died before, or shortly after, taking power. Around 1899,⁴ he survived an attempt to regain power by the former Regent Demo Rinpoche, who tried to assassinate him through the use of 'black magic'. While the Dalai Lama opposed capital punishment, the offenders were severely punished.⁵ A lasting consequence of this affair was the alienation of Demo Rinpoche's monastery, Tengyeling, which was to side with the Chinese in the revolt of 1911–12. This tendency for disaffected elements of society to turn to China for support is a recurring feature of twentieth-century Tibetan history.

Having survived smallpox in 1900, the Dalai Lama confronted a decline in the standards of Tibet's internal administration; a decline probably characteristic of Tibet during periods of Regentship. In a proclamation issued in 1901, and discussed here by Tenzing Chhodak (Chapter 79), the Dalai Lama ordered corrections to specified (and thus, presumably, extant) social misconduct and petty abuses of official power.

This edict draws on traditional Asian forms of expression dating back at least to the great Indian Emperor Aśoka, in that the authority of the document derives from the concept of *dharma* ('duty', 'appropriate behaviour', 'religious injunction'). This implied a socio-religious contract between ruler and ruled for the ultimate benefit of individual, society and cosmic order. Such edicts, considered effective on both micro- and macrocosmic levels, lack a precise contemporary Western legal equivalent, being as much a set of moral guidelines as laws in the European sense. Thus the 1901 proclamation forbids the adulteration of food as well as proclaiming the need for Tibetan citizens to undertake religious acts and obligations.

Chhodak suggests the proclamation was subsequently used as evidence to demonstrate to the British that Tibet was a country in which a 'well-intentioned code of law was in force'. This is consistent with numerous other instances in which it has appeared a priority for the Tibetan government to explain itself to outsiders in terms of a Buddhist state identity. The representation of Tibet as a land in which religious

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principles were paramount implied a virtuous and ethical society and government. A wider agenda may, however, also be implied if Chhodak is correct in identifying an influence on this document from Agvan Dorzhiev.

Dorzhiev, a Russian Buryat graduate of Drepung monastery, was a personal attendant of the young 13th Dalai Lama and is assumed to have influenced the Tibetan ruler to explore the possibility of closer ties with Russia. Certainly he was one of very few of those close to the Dalai Lama who had a wide knowledge of the outside world (having visited Peking, Calcutta, St Petersburg and Paris before 1900). His exact role in Central Asian politics has been subject to considerable debate throughout the twentieth century. While his biographer is correct in describing Dorzhiev as 'Lhasa's Emissary to the Tsar'⁶ rather than the reverse, he was also of use to the Russians.

As Chhodak points out, however, the Buddhist Dorzhiev ultimately envisaged a Central Asian political model very different to that favoured by the imperial nations (including China). His concept of a Pan-Mongol Tibetan-Buddhist state (embracing Tibet, Mongolia, the Buryat and Kalmyk Buddhist regions of Russia and the Buddhist Himalayan states) never developed into a political movement. But the idea, which Chhodak traces to Galdan Khan in the eighteenth century, occurred to other important figures in the region, not least to Sir Charles Bell, the British Political Officer responsible for British Indian relations with Tibet for most of the period from 1908–21.

Dorzhiev was active at the Tibetan court during a period in which the predominant tendency of the Tibetan government was to oppose both the manifestations of Chinese secular power at Lhasa and the territorial advance of the British from the south. Tibet was not, however, strong enough to oppose these powers on her own, and apparently sought the patronage of another powerful state. One Tibetan faction continued to favour reliance on Sino-Tibetan relations based on traditional religious ties. This tendency was particularly strong within monasteries such as Tengyeling and Drepung, which traditionally enjoyed close ties with the Chinese and housed many monks from China's frontier regions. But other elements of Tibetan government, presumably influenced by Dorzhiev's advice, saw Russia as a potential ally. The Tsar had no apparent designs on Tibetan territory and the benign religious policies of the Russian government towards its Buddhist subjects seemed to qualify it as a protector of Buddhism. There was also a metaphysical factor. Russia was identified in some quarters with the mythical Buddhist northern paradise of Shambhala, the kingdom that, according to a popular legend, would save Buddhism in the final cataclysm. Russia could thus appear a suitable patron for Tibet.

It was to Russia that the Dalai Lama first turned. But his decision to send Dorzhiev as an emissary to the Tsar was to have consequences unforeseen by Lhasa, for it caused great alarm to the British imperial Government of India. Protecting the security of India, the 'Jewel in the Crown' of British imperial possessions, was a major, if not the major, concern of the British. Thus they saw the massive expansion of the Russian empire across Central Asia during the nineteenth century as potentially threatening that 'Jewel'. But an isolationist Tibet had hitherto appeared an effective barrier against Russian influence reaching India and British security concerns were focused on India's north-west frontier regions, closer to Russian territory.

In 1899, Lord Curzon became Viceroy of India. He had travelled widely in Central Asia, where he had witnessed the expansion of the Russian empire at first hand and he

was determined to prevent any Russian challenge to British rule in India. Arrogant and autocratic, he was also a man of considerable vision and a sense of history, whose reign was in many senses the high tide of empire; before that time the British empire was expanding, after Curzon it was consolidating, preserving and ultimately contracting.

When Curzon attempted to establish diplomatic ties with Lhasa the Tibetan government refused to accept any official communications from the British. The subsequent discovery that the Dalai Lama was acting independently of China and communicating with Russia through the agency of Agvan Dorzhiev led Curzon to plan a mission to Tibet to establish British influence at Lhasa. That 1903–4 mission, commonly known as the ‘Younghusband mission’ after its political leader, Colonel Francis Younghusband, irrevocably changed Tibet’s relations with the outside world.

We lack an account of the Younghusband mission that provides any serious analysis of the Tibetan perspective, and none is included here. The Tibetan sources remain unavailable or unexplored, while the Chinese accounts add nothing of value. Western accounts of the mission are concerned with Western achievements and personalities, and the Tibetans appear as actors only in stereotypical form. At best these works acknowledge the Tibetans’ limited world view and the impossibility of their understanding the powerful forces allied against them. But of the factions within Tibetan policy-making, the leading personalities and the interests that they represented, or of the changing perspectives as events unfolded, we know little or nothing.

What is obvious is that the Tibetans regarded Younghusband’s forces as an invasion. They refused to negotiate and deployed their army to expel them. But the Tibetan forces were no match for a professional modern army. The Dalai Lama fled his capital on 29 July 1904, five days before Younghusband’s mission reached the outskirts of Lhasa. Younghusband then negotiated a treaty with the Abbot of Ganden monastery, who had been appointed Regent in the Dalai Lama’s absence. The 1904 Anglo-Tibetan Convention, which was signed in the Potala on 7 September 1904, excluded ‘Foreign Powers’ (i.e. Russia) from involvement in Tibetan affairs, but gave the British the right to station representatives in Tibet.

From the Tibetan – and the Chinese – perspective, the Younghusband mission was a foreign invasion, one which could be seen as the culmination of a long drawn out campaign to over-run Tibet. Warren Hastings had despatched agents to Tibet in the eighteenth century. In the nineteenth century the British had sent *pandits* to explore across the Himalayas, and there were numerous intelligence-gathering missions by other British officers and agents, in particular Sarat Chandra Das in the early 1880s. These missions, allied to the gradual nineteenth-century British takeover of Tibetan spheres of influence such as Darjeeling, Ladakh, Kumaon and Sikkim, and the precedent of the Macauley mission which had threatened to ‘invade’ Tibet in 1885–6, must have convinced Lhasa and Peking that the British aspired to annex Tibet.

The great fear of the Tibetan government had been that the British would threaten their religious system. But the Younghusband mission left Tibet’s religious institutions largely undamaged, and promptly withdrew entirely from Lhasa after signing the 1904 Convention. The British did establish diplomatic posts in Gyantse and Yatung (in southern Tibet), under the guise of ‘Trade Agencies’, but the officers posted there seemed sympathetic to Tibetan interests and were clearly hostile to the Chinese presence in Tibet. The seemingly benign nature of the British presence must have led to a gradual Tibetan reassessment of the British ‘threat’ to their system. The possibility of seeking

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British support thus gradually emerged as an option for Tibet to cultivate. But if the British Indian government had an interest in Tibet, the Home Government did not. They sought to solve the Tibetan issue through agreements with Russia and China, agreements to which Tibet was not a party.

Younghusband had found no evidence of Russian influence in Lhasa, and after their defeat in the Russo-Japanese war of 1905 the 'Russian threat' to India seemed to have vanished. The 1907 Anglo-Russian Convention temporarily ended the Great Game, with both parties agreeing not to post representatives in Lhasa and to deal with the Tibetan government through China, which the Convention recognized as the suzerain power in Tibet. But the 'Russian threat' was to re-emerge after the 1917 Revolution, with an ideology of communist internationalism replacing imperialism as the motive for Russian colonial expansion. The Dalai Lama, meanwhile, kept his options open and never entirely rejected the possibility of ties with Russia until the true nature of communist religious policy became clear in the 1920s.

Historians, most notably Alastair Lamb, have thoroughly mined the available Western sources – reliable and otherwise⁷ – concerning the Younghusband mission and the nature of Tibet's relations with Tsarist Russia. The post-1989 opening of Russia's historical archives has recently stimulated research into this issue. The use of Soviet sources has tended to confirm that while British fears of Tsarist Russian influence at Lhasa may have been genuine, the threat was not. The Russian archives tend to confirm that the 13th Dalai Lama was actively seeking ties with Russia rather than the reverse, and suggest that Agvan Dorzhiev was motivated by his Buddhist faith rather than 'Russian gold'. David S. van der Oye's article concerning the development of Russo-Tibetan ties (Chapter 80) concludes that despite their use of Buddhist pilgrims in Tibet for intelligence-gathering, in the wider geo-political context "as far as Russia was concerned, Tibet was a minor side-show of the Great Game".

But it remains apparent that Russia's ability to engage the British empire in support for a Tibetan polity served Tsarist interests elsewhere – particularly in Afghanistan and Mongolia. Thus, while there was never a realistic or fully developed Russian policy of expansion into Tibet, the perception of that 'threat' served Russia's wider interests.

Discussion of Russo-Tibetan relations in this period has frequently tended to present the Tibetans as 'puppets', mere chess-pieces on the imperial board, essentially reactive to imperial initiatives. Tibetan agency is emphasized in the works of Nikolai Kuleshov, illustrated here by his article on Dorzhiev (Chapter 81), which draws upon the archives of the Russian Foreign Ministry to defend the thesis that Tsarist Russia was not an expansionist power in regard to the territory of the Manchu empire. Denying that Russia utilized British Indian fears of Russian intervention in Tibet in order to gain concessions elsewhere, he argues that Russian officials actually 'neglected or missed the definite political benefits to be gained from intervention in these affairs'. We may expect further studies drawing on various other Russian archives to develop the debate on these issues.

Increasingly, studies of the Central Asian imperial strategies of Russia, China and Britain have refined the tendency to portray the policies of the imperial nations as monolithic tendencies. For example, British policy in the region was influenced by the differing interests and ideas of numerous political and ideological factions. Most notable of these were the British Home Government, the Viceroy of India and the

various officials of different departments of the Government of India, as well as individual imperial frontier officers, trading and missionary lobbies, and the influence of wider ideals of a Christian imperial 'civilizing mission'.

Similarly, while we know less about the factors behind Chinese policy, there were clearly provincial and individual human forces at work on the Sino-Tibetan frontier (as can be seen here in the articles by Sperling, King and McGranahan). In the case of Russia, the Tsar, the Foreign Ministry, the War and Finance Ministries, the Russian Buddhist communities (both regional and 'popular' urban), the Russian Geographical Society and imperial frontier officers all represented different interests and ideologies in regard to Tibet. More sophisticated analysis of the interrelating and competing elements which powered change in imperial frontier policies is needed, particularly, if sources become available, in regard to the Sino-Tibetan frontier.

What is clear is that any form of Tibetan alliance with Russia, Britain or Republican China represented a model of change for Tibet which was inimical to the focus of Lhasa's policy throughout the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries – the preservation of Tibet's established order. The British imperial model of modernization actually differed very little in substance from those of imperial Russia and China – although the latter advent of communist regimes in Moscow and Peking obviously represented a new model of change which was openly hostile to Tibet's established religious and aristocratic elites. But the imperial nations in the early twentieth century all saw modernization as involving not just technological, but political and ideological change, with strongly secular tendencies in education and science. Change in the form of Western social models therefore threatened the existing social and political structures of Tibet, and was thus strongly opposed by those who represented those structures.

In retrospect, Dorzhiev's Pan-Mongolian Buddhist model might have provided an alternative and more culturally appropriate path for Buddhist Central Asia. But that formulation was unrealistic in practice and the indigenous intellectual and political elites of Central Asia otherwise failed to develop and articulate coherent alternative political models to those imposed by the Western powers.

* * *

The withdrawal of the British forces from Lhasa and the Dalai Lama's flight into exile left a power vacuum in Lhasa in 1904-5. But British acknowledgement of China's suzerain status⁸ over Tibet (formalized, without reference to Tibet, by the 1906 Convention between Great Britain and China) allowed Peking to reorganize her position in Tibet during the 1905-10 period. Outside of the Lhasa-Shigatse centre, China's main concern was to subdue the Sino-Tibetan frontier region of Kham, a campaign which is the subject of a fundamental article here by Elliot Sperling (Chapter 82).

By the administrative division of the Kham region in 1725, the Chinese had extended their frontier westwards from Tachienlu to Batang, drawing approximately half of Kham into the Sichuan province. But they regarded the new territory as a wilderness inhabited by 'barbarians', and made little effort to impose their authority there. Thus, in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, the Khampa states, while acknowledging the religious leadership of Tibet's Dalai Lamas, "owed", Sperling concludes, "only a very loose allegiance to the central governments of either China or Tibet, and some were outright independent".

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Sperling illustrates that in the Chinese perspective, the ease with which the Younghusband mission had reached Lhasa indicated that Tibet would pose little hindrance to British imperial forces in the event that these aimed at Sichuan – a fear not unlike that of the British view of the Russian threat. Thus it became necessary, in the Chinese perspective, to strengthen the Chinese position in Tibet in order to defend the south-western frontiers; to make Tibet, in effect, a buffer region against the British imperial forces in India. China's 'forward' policy in Kham, while drawing on earlier precedents, may thus be seen as developing in reaction to British moves into Tibet, although Chinese efforts to impose effective rule on the Khampa regions were begun at the behest of the Sichuan government in 1903, even before the Younghusband mission. The Chinese focused on breaking the major pan-regional power structure, that of the network of local Buddhist monasteries. In a brutal campaign, Chinese forces under the command of General Chao Erh-feng overcame the monastic centres of Khampa resistance. China then attempted to Sinicize the region, setting aside land for settlement by Chinese immigrants and imposing Chinese law and culture on the Khampas. Having subdued much of Kham, including areas previously under at least nominal Tibetan authority, Chinese attention was then turned to strengthening its forces in Central Tibet. Two thousand of Chao's troops were thus despatched to Lhasa, arriving there in February 1910.

Sources that reveal the perspective of 'subaltern' actors in the great Central Asian dramas are rare, not least because literacy was almost unknown among the non-elite classes there. This makes the account of a common soldier who served through these campaigns of particular interest. Louis Magrath King, a Chinese-speaking British official of the China Consular Service, who was stationed at Tachienlu in 1913–16 and 1919–22, provides the account given here of one such soldier's tale (Chapter 83). It reveals that the individual soldiers of Chao's forces were by no means certain of their ability to enter Lhasa, firing warning shots which the Tibetans interpreted as an attack. If true, the account illustrates the importance of individual agency in history.

During these years in which China established her authority in Tibet, the Dalai Lama seemed to many European observers to be a peripheral figure unlikely to be of further secular importance. Indeed both China and Britain toyed with the idea of establishing the Panchen Lama as the ruler of Tibet, or at least of some part of it. The 6th Panchen Lama, who was then in his twenties, was a somewhat worldly figure, shrewd, but an indecisive character, poorly served by his advisors. While he ultimately rejected the overtures of the imperial nations, he failed to provide a focal point for the Tibetan resistance or to significantly defend Tibetan interests against the Chinese moves. The perception that he had co-operated with the Chinese, in particular his symbolically significant actions in occupying the Dalai Lama's palaces of the Potala and the Norbu Lingka while in Lhasa, contributed to the future dispute between the major Lhasa and Shigatse incarnations.⁹

Having fled to Mongolia, the Dalai Lama spent more than a year in Urga, at the court of the (Gyantse-born) Jetsundamba Hutukhtu, the leading Gelugpa incarnation in Mongolia. He then moved to Kumbum monastery in Amdo (or Kokonor).¹⁰ While in Urga the Dalai Lama, accompanied by Agvan Dorzhiev, held talks with Russia's consular representatives in Mongolia and Peking. But it became clear that Russia was not prepared to offer him military support and he was left with little option but to come to an accommodation with China.

The Dalai Lama and his large retinue made their way slowly towards Peking in 1907-8. En route they visited Tibetan sacred sites in China such as Mount Wutai Shan. In this the Tibetan leader can be seen as symbolically reiterating both his religious aspect, the basis of his continuing prestige, and that of Tibetan Buddhist sacred geography embracing Chinese territory. But at Wutai Shan he also met for the first time with representatives of the United States and Japan. In Peking, where he eventually arrived in September 1908, these diplomatic initiatives continued and the British were able to informally advise the Dalai Lama that they had no objections to his return to Tibet.

The Chinese leadership, however, proved less obliging. While the Dalai Lama's reception at the Chinese court was delayed by his refusal to *kow-tow* to the Empress Dowager and the young Emperor – an important symbolic statement – a compromise kneeling gesture of respect was allowed and the reception went ahead. The Chinese agreed to accept and investigate the Dalai Lama's complaints about Chao Erh-feng's actions in Kham, but ordered him to follow China's commands and to communicate with the Emperor only through the Chinese Amban in Lhasa. In a final blow to his secular authority, the Chinese then awarded the Dalai Lama the humiliating title of 'Loyally Submissive Vice-Regent . . . '.

But the Dalai Lama may already have been considering independence from China,¹¹ and must have observed the debased state of the Manchu court with considerable interest. The Emperor was a feeble figure, apparently addicted to opium and subject to the Empress Dowager, whose own position was tenuous. Significantly, having supported the Boxer uprising in 1900, she had little support from the European powers that, along with Japan, were increasingly dominating China. The Dalai Lama performed, at the Empress Dowager's request, a 'long life' ritual for her on 2 November 1908. Either its intent or its efficacy must be in doubt. She died two weeks later, a day after the death of the young Emperor.

After performing the funeral ceremonies for the deceased couple and witnessing the installation of the youth who is remembered as 'The Last Emperor', the Dalai Lama left Peking. He returned to Lhasa via Kumbum, arriving in his capital late in December 1909. Amidst considerable tension – the recent appearance of Halley's comet was seen as an omen of war – the troops of Chao Erh-feng arrived in Lhasa some weeks later. While accounts of events vary, the Dalai Lama's response was clear: on 12 February 1910, he again fled Lhasa for exile. This time, however, with active support from local British officials, he fled to India. China was then in virtually complete control of Tibet, with international acquiescence. The future prospects for an independent Tibet appeared non-existent.

* * *

Events at the centre of empire inevitably affect the periphery, and it was the collapse of central authority in China after the 1911 revolution that transformed Tibet's status. The Chinese forces in Lhasa were isolated and after months of fighting they surrendered to the Tibetans and were repatriated via India after British mediation. With Tibet then free of all Chinese officials,¹² the way was cleared for the restoration of the Dalai Lama. Having returned to Tibet from India in June 1912, he re-entered Lhasa in January 1913 as the undisputed ruler of Tibet. The actions he took against those who

had sided with the Chinese were restrained. Tengyeling monastery, which had sheltered Chinese forces, was disbanded and its leaders exiled, but there were apparently no executions of the collaborators who remained.¹³

In the period immediately after his return, the Dalai Lama made a number of significant decisions that can be seen to indicate his intentions for the future of Tibet. In the wider geo-political perspective, the most important of these was the commencement of tri-partite negotiations over the status of Tibet. Talks between Tibet, China and the Government of India were held in 1913–14 at Simla, the British Indian summer capital. European sources indicate that Tibet's aim at Simla was to obtain recognition of its independence from China. While Tibet and British India reached agreement at Simla, China refused to ratify the Convention (included here as Chapter 84), and the Sino-Tibetan issue was left unresolved. But as the Convention was regarded as binding between India and Tibet, it resulted in several small, but strategically significant sections of Tibetan territory being annexed to the Indian side of the border demarcated at the Convention ('the McMahon Line'). The most important of these was Tawang, home to a monastery owing allegiance to Lhasa's great Drepung monastery. Tibet apparently ceded this territory in return for arms supplies and the hope of future British support against China.

While we do not have significant Chinese and Tibetan sources concerning Simla, the British sources on the Convention have been most thoroughly examined by Alastair Lamb, whose work on the period is represented here by two articles. The first (Chapter 85), examines the details of the Simla negotiations in regard to the arrangements for the Indo-Tibetan frontier. The second (Chapter 86) is Lamb's magisterial summary of the situation in 1914, which outlines the course of Anglo-Tibetan relations, and the events and consequences of the Simla conference. Both reveal the extent to which Tibet's political and geographical existence was determined by the policies of the imperial nations, who possessed mapping technology and geo-strategic information far beyond that available to the Tibetans.

Lamb's work is followed by Clive Christie's article (Chapter 87), which examines the regional context of the debate over Tibet's status during the 1914–21 period and illustrates the tri-partite diverging perspectives on Tibetan policy held by the Government of India, the British Legation in Peking and the British Foreign Office.

The Dalai Lama had expressed his view of Tibet's status within weeks of returning to Lhasa. His Proclamation, issued on 15 February 1913, is commonly described by the Tibetan exile authorities as a Declaration of Independence. The Proclamation, reproduced here in a translation by later Tibetan Foreign Minister W. D. Shakabpa (Chapter 88),¹⁴ was sent to every district of Tibet. The document should be seen in conjunction with two others, the Tibetan Government's contemporary statement to the Government of India that "we have decided to separate altogether from them [the Chinese]", and the Dalai Lama's reply (for which, however, Bell is apparently the only source) to the Chinese offer to reinstate his titles. He responded that "he was not asking the Chinese for any rank, as he intended to exercise both temporal and spiritual rule in Tibet".¹⁵ The Proclamation may be seen as primarily for domestic consumption, the dismissively succinct statements to British India and China were for the outside world.

The 'Declaration of Independence' begins in the fashion of Buddhist literature, by establishing through lineage the authority of the author to make the statements that

follow. Thus the Dalai Lama refers to the Buddha and to the *bodhisattva* Avalokiteśvara as the divine sources of his authority. It then describes the previous relationship that existed between China and Tibet as one based on the patron–priest (*mchod yon*) relationship, and accuses the “Chinese authorities in Szechuan and Yunnan” (rather than the central government in Peking) of attempting to colonize and subordinate Tibet. Whether this was a diplomatic fiction or recognition of the effects of Chinese provincial autonomy is a matter for future research.

The document goes on to describe the Dalai Lama’s efforts to communicate with the Emperor and the subsequent collapse of the Manchu empire. Then, in a clear statement of intent, the Dalai Lama proclaimed that “I am now in the course of driving out the remnants of Chinese troops from Do Kham in eastern Tibet.” Signalling “a period of peace and happiness” the proclamation then returns to the format of his edict in 1901. It emphasizes the pre-eminent importance of following Buddhism and preserving Buddhist institutions in Tibet, denounces the corrupt ways of officials, forbids harsh punishments and appeals to Tibetans to assist in the defence of their “small, religious, and *independent* country” (emphasis added). The Proclamation ends with a populist gesture clearly appealing to the peasantry and landless cultivators – a three-year halt to land taxes and an order transferring the ownership of undeveloped land to those willing to cultivate it.

Another significant statement of Tibetan intent was the Mongol–Tibetan Treaty of 11 January 1913 (included here as Chapter 89). In this, the two states recognized each other’s independent status and pledged mutual assistance in the event of “dangers from without and from within”. Parshotam Mehra’s 1969 article concerning this treaty (Chapter 90) is primarily concerned with its effect on the Simla Convention. It draws attention to the close interrelationship between the political models imposed on Tibet and Mongolia by the imperial powers in this period, with the artificial ‘Inner’ and ‘Outer’ Tibet divisions suggested at the Simla Convention mirroring the Sino-Russian division of Mongolia. The circumstances surrounding the Treaty now need re-examination in the light of newly available Russo-Mongol sources and new understandings of the role of Dorzhiev, who signed the Treaty in his capacity as Tibetan plenipotentiary. We also need to consider whether the Dalai Lama’s probably reluctant acceptance of the ‘Inner’ and ‘Outer’ division of Tibet agreed at Simla represented a pragmatic readiness to compromise in the hope of future political or military gains in the east, or whether this definition, far short of the independence sought by Dharamsala today, actually suggests a more culturally appropriate Asiatic mode of territorial definition (or at least compromise) than that of the Western ‘nation states’ concept.

The Dalai Lama’s Proclamation, his communications with the governments of India and China, and the Mongol–Tibet Treaty all explicitly articulated a Tibetan political entity separate from the Chinese Republic. In the Tibetan perspective their relationship with China had been a religious bond between the Dalai Lama and the Manchu Emperor. The end of the Manchu dynasty severed those links and initiated a new political relationship. But while these documents are powerful evidence of Tibet’s desire for independence, they do not explicitly reject the possibility of future Sino-Tibetan links. Nor did they define, at least in Western political terms, either the model of statehood that Tibet had followed or that which it would adopt in that new era.

After his return to Lhasa, the Dalai Lama faced a series of problems that were all, in the widest sense, concerned with the future model of Tibetan statehood and the

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need to define precisely what was meant by 'Tibet'. The nature of the Tibetan polity, its internal political and administrative form, its frontiers and relations to its neighbours, what we might call its 'founding myths' and even its dominant culture were all open to construction and negotiation at that point. A Tibetan polity had existed in various forms since at least the seventh century. Despite periods in which centralized authority was lacking (most notably in the post-Lang Darma era) or under external control, socio-political continuities established a Tibetan identity, recognized by Tibet's neighbouring people and polities. In that sense there existed a Tibetan nation, able to draw upon a collective history and traditions and to articulate a separate identity as the basis for a new state.

But Tibet, even in 1913–14, did not exist in the form that had become the paramount world model of independent statehood: the European concept of the 'nation state'. Not least, it lacked the essential element of established frontiers and it also included areas of ambiguous sovereignty, territory which was under Ladakhi or Bhutanese administration. The history and implications of these enclaves are examined here in the article by John Bray (Chapter 91), which demonstrates the complexities of pre-modern political formations in the Himalayas, as well as the difficulty of rendering these forms in terms of Western political understandings.

If Tibet was to be accepted into the world community of nations, it needed to reframe these elements in modern political terms and to demonstrate its independence through such means as entering international agreements. While Tibet's internal character and administration were of less concern to the world community, which embraced numerous systems of government (democracies and autocracies, secular and theocratic states, etc.), the nature of Tibet's internal system of administration was another element not necessarily fixed by tradition and precedent. Even the constitutional nature of the Dalai Lama's power required negotiation.

The nineteenth-century concept of Tibetans being unquestioningly obedient to the will of their 'God-King' has been replaced by our contemporary understanding that Tibetans did not necessarily accept the supreme authority of a Dalai Lama in both the secular and spiritual realms. In the modern period, for example, many eastern Tibetans rejected the Dalai Lama's secular leadership even if they acknowledged his spiritual authority, while in Shigatse and areas under its influence (including much of Amdo), the Panchen Lama was apparently regarded by many as supreme in both spheres. While there are no studies of the Bön-po in this regard, we may assume that they, along with followers of other Buddhist sects or even local cults, held varying perspectives on this question, both in time and space. Adding to the complexity of these issues is that there was also a wider Buddhist understanding that a spiritual leader should not be sullied by involvement in secular matters.

Apart from the Dalai Lama's position, there were a number of powerful individual ranks within the traditional structures of Tibet. Among the most significant of these were the Regent(s), the Panchen Lama, the heads of the various sects of Tibetan Buddhism, the abbots of the 'Big Three' Lhasa monasteries, and the members of the Kashag (*bKa'shags*: the Tibetan Cabinet). There were also aristocratic families, charismatic individuals, wealthy traders, 'unruly monks' and, particularly in the twentieth century, the military and the potentially important peasantry to consider. All of these groups and individuals were capable of influencing or disrupting the Tibetan state, and most of them would do so at some point during the 13th Dalai Lama's lifetime.

Yet the 13th Dalai Lama was able to establish his power initially, to gradually increase it and, particularly during the period from 1913 to c.1924,¹⁶ to impose his will in numerous specific instances over powerful individual and organizational forces. He controlled the state monopoly of military force and communications and obtained information from both official channels and through his employment of intelligence agents answerable to him personally. Considerable historical fluctuations occur in the extent to which all leaders attract support or may exercise power and if his rule was neither unquestioned nor unchallenged, his was the ultimate power within Tibet. But the nature of that power is not reflected in the Lhasa-centric perspective of much of the older European literature and works that apply the language of European political models to the Tibetan system.

State power in Tibetan (indeed Asian) society ideally required acknowledgement on, and was generally expressed on, a primarily ritual and symbolic level, abounding in cosmological associations. This applied both in external relations with other polities and in internal relations with the state's 'citizens'. Thus the relationships between conquering and conquered, or stronger and weaker, polities were acknowledged in symbolic terms through major rituals, gifts of a bride, 'tribute missions' and such like. Similarly, the Dalai Lama's power required acknowledgement primarily on a symbolic level, leaving open to negotiation many aspects that are considered to require state control in Western understanding.

This system clearly implies a social hierarchy, again with cosmological associations. Individual or even collective acknowledgement of power by members of any one group within the hierarchy was not essential; it was the leader(s) of that group whose acknowledgement was required. If the followers of the Panchen Lama, for example, held that incarnation in the highest esteem – above that of the Lhasa incarnation – this was of little or no significance as long as the Panchen Lama himself acknowledged the Dalai Lama's authority through various symbolic and ritual actions. While considerable room for contestation may be constructed within ritual, this symbolic affirmation within the process was its necessary element in the perspective of the acknowledged power.

While the application of power within the Tibetan system was not necessarily the measure of that power, the system required, or at least functioned best, in the presence of one whose status was at least theoretically beyond that of any particular faction. Only the Dalai Lama enjoyed such status and the lack of clear and determined leadership in the absence of a Dalai Lama is obvious in such periods as 1905–10 and the 1940s. While a strong Regent provided a certain unified leadership in the nineteenth century, Tibet faced few major structural challenges in that period, and in the twentieth century a diffused power structure did not function well in crisis during the absence of a Dalai Lama.

The existence of various powerful individuals and positions within Tibetan structures of government was an institutionalized diffusion of power. While it may have functioned as a system of 'checks and balances' that prevented dictatorship or the abuse of power, it derived from historical contestations or circumstances, and by the early twentieth century had attained a balance that may be seen to have contributed to both the stable and the dynamic aspects of Tibetan society. But the system neither allowed nor created democratic alternatives. There was no constitutional method of deposing a Dalai Lama, and no challenge to the right of the 13th Dalai Lama to take

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power occurred even at that classically revolutionary moment (in the Marxist sense) when he returned to Tibet in 1912–13.

What remains to be analysed is whether the limits of his authority were shown in the 1920s when the overwhelmingly predominant conservative forces within Tibetan society united against the more modernist direction in which the Dalai Lama was leading them. There was a change in policy, but the question is whether the Dalai Lama led this change or reacted to pressure from conservative elements. Did he lead or was he forced to follow?

* * *

In agreeing its previously largely undemarcated Indo-Tibetan frontier at the Simla Convention, Tibet took a step towards fulfilling an essential element of the nation state in the Western definition – that it should have defined and demarcated frontiers. More problematic was the Sino-Tibetan frontier, a contested region of conflicting historical claims and fluctuating local allegiances. During the early years of Tibet's 'independence' this frontier was of critical importance, for it was there that a definition of 'Tibet' had to be established as much in battle as in negotiation.

In his 'Declaration of Independence', the Dalai Lama's reference to ongoing efforts to evict the remaining Chinese soldiers from 'eastern Tibet' implied a specific Tibetan understanding of that territory, one which included the ethnically Tibetan provinces of Kham and Amdo. That definition of a Tibetan state drew on an indigenous understanding of Tibet as a Buddhist entity, comprising followers of Tibetan Buddhism, and covering the territory inhabited by Tibetan Buddhists of ethnic Tibetan origin. But that 'Buddhist' Tibet embraced a far larger territory and much greater population than that inherited by the Dalai Lama in 1895.

The status of Kham and Amdo was particularly problematical. These regions had little political loyalty to remote centres such as Lhasa and Peking and both regions were in many ways culturally distinct from both Tibet and China. While their dialect and diet were Tibetan, for example, their male cultural archetype was a warrior, albeit with a Buddhist gloss. The warrior traditions of the region were historically manifest in frequent violence and continuing blood feuds. While many of Tibet's greatest religious figures were from eastern Tibet, so too were most of its fighting monks (*ldab ldob*) and soldiers.

The extent to which we might construct a Khampa or an Amdowa nationalism is debatable, but these regions cannot necessarily be located in a centre-periphery relationship with Lhasa in many categories that in the Western understanding are within the province of government. Yet we must be cautious in expressing the traditional Tibetan awareness of regionality in modern Western political terms, or in assigning a strong historical basis to their contemporary formulations of a hierarchy of identities in which 'Tibetan' identity is paramount. Here we may note a divergence of conclusions produced by the anthropological emphasis on the primary importance of regional identity in Tibetan self-identification and the historians' emphasis on the continuity or otherwise of the structures and processes of central rule.

Much of Kham had been part of Tibet in the Yarlung dynasty period. But it had not been subject to Lhasa's control again until after 1648, when the 5th Dalai Lama instituted the census tax process there. As noted in Volume II, this process can be

seen as a critical indicator of precisely which groups acknowledged (or were forced to acknowledge) the authority of which states or polities in a particular period. The status of Amdo is even more problematical than that of Kham. It had passed from Mongol control to the administration of the Ch'ing empire in the 1720s and while its population consisted mainly of ethnically Tibetan peoples, Amdo had remained largely beyond the secular authority of the Tibetan government. But a chain of Buddhist monasteries (most notably Kumbum and Labrang) maintained the region within the Tibetan Buddhist world. This clash of religious and geo-political systems greatly complicates the definition of 'Tibet' in regard to the eastern and north-eastern regions where the precise frontiers of a historical Tibet remain open to discussion.

The events and issues in eastern Tibet in the 1913–33 period are the subject of four articles included here. The first is a previously unpublished official report submitted by Oliver Coales (Chapter 92), a China Consular Service officer stationed in Tachienlu in 1916–17. A detached and careful observer, Coales describes the geographical, political and socio-economic situation in the Sino-Tibetan border areas which had been devastated by years of fighting. His report, typical of those filed by British officials and now resting in imperial archives, includes valuable sociological material and an appendix of the monasteries of the region. Also attached to the report are Coales's separate and more controversial comments on the greatly limited extent to which the Tibetan authorities actually exercised religious or secular authority in the region.

A less detached perspective is that given by Eric (later Sir Eric) Teichman, who was in a unique position to observe events on the frontier in the 1917–18 period. Teichman succeeded Coales at Tachienlu in late 1917 and remained there until April/May 1919, during which time he negotiated the truce which ended fighting between Chinese and Tibetan forces in Kham. His 1922 work, *Travels of a Consular Officer in Eastern Tibet*, remains an important and informative source on events and local political units in that period. Teichman, however, was by no means a detached observer. He co-operated with the Government of India officials supporting a strong Tibet and his report deliberately downplays contemporary British support for Tibet (not least in the form of arms supplies). Thus the extracts of his work included here (Chapter 93), which Lamb describes as "designed to make the British case by the adroit use of history", should be read critically.¹⁷

What Teichman does reveal is the regional nature of the conflicts in eastern Tibet. Both at a provincial level, where Yunnan and Sichuan had separate interests and armies, and at the local level, where provincial centres such as Chamdo, Batang and Tachienlu all housed separate military commands, China's forces were divided and by no means always subject to Peking's authority. Indeed the lack of central authority in Republican China meant that many of its troops had degenerated into brigandage, while the presence of rebellious Muslim forces to the north further complicated the situation.

A second extract from the work of Louis Magrath King (Chapter 94) concerns the Kalon (*bka' blon*) Lama, Chamba Tendar. One of the outstanding figures of modern Tibetan history, he commanded the Tibetan forces in Kham from 1913 until his death – possibly by poison – in 1922. The Kalon Lama had been promoted to cabinet rank on his appointment as Governor-General of Kham, a precedent indicative of the importance that the 13th Dalai Lama attached to that region in contrast to its previous

neglect by the Lhasa government. In his antiquarian style, King paints a sympathetic but incisive portrait in which asides and layers of seeming triviality are used to build up a rounded picture of an individual who influenced geo-political events, while the extract again emphasizes the localized interests active in regional conflicts.

That the real issues involved in the dispute over Tibet's eastern frontier were never properly resolved was demonstrated when fighting broke out again between Chinese and Tibetan forces in the 1930s. The extent to which these recurring crises were a product of cultural and historical agency in which traditional understandings of territory were tested against the modern concept of the 'nation state' is examined here by Carol McGranahan (Chapter 95).

In terms of Western scholarship, an understanding of the continuing vitality of Tibet's spiritual traditions in the 1895–1959 period is generally subsumed by the emphasis on the political events of this period of Tibetan history. A reminder of the ongoing process of Tibetan scriptural traditions is included in the form of David Jackson's article on the Sakya teacher Dagyab Thubten Zangpo (c.1891/2–c.1930) (Chapter 96). Although a conservative scholar who emphasized the study of the fundamental texts of Mahayana Buddhism, he was none the less influenced by that pan-sectarian openness associated with the Rimed movement, while his life followed the traditional pattern of those religious figures who travelled extensively among Buddhist centres of learning, both studying and teaching. Jackson's principal source for this biography was the subject's last-surviving major pupil, and the work reflects the characteristic nature of Buddhist hagiographical literature, which is not without its flashes of insight into alternative perspectives.

Christie and Lamb's articles have touched upon the question of Tibet's relations with Japan in regard to the perception of Japan as a potential force in Tibetan affairs in that period. Scott Berry's work (Chapter 97), an extract from his popular study entitled *Monks, Spies and a Soldier of Fortune*, discusses the nine Japanese travellers who reached Tibet and briefly summarizes the otherwise neglected issue of Japanese links to Tibet. These were conducted at an individual rather than state level, but in addition to their contributions to the academic study of Tibet, the Japanese visitors did influence several areas of Tibetan history.

Count Otani Kozui (who met the Dalai Lama at Wu-ta'i-shan in 1908) was behind most of the early Japanese initiatives towards Tibet. The leader of the ultra-nationalist Nishi Honganji sect of Japanese Buddhism, he apparently sought closer ties between the two Buddhist states. But the ultimate ambitions and precise historical role of Otani requires further study, in particular his links with British Indian intelligence officers, such as Lt. Col. W. F. O'Connor, the first permanent British representative in Gyantse.

The British imperial officer Sir Charles Bell was the first great modern European scholar of Tibetan history and culture to enjoy the benefit of prolonged access to Tibet. Bell's own account of his mission to Lhasa in 1920–1 is included here (Chapter 98), in part due to the significance of its form; that of a lecture given to the Central Asian Society in London around 1923. That lecture was attended by some of the greatest names in the history of early twentieth-century Western relations with Tibet – Sir Francis Younghusband, Dr W. M. McGovern (an American who had travelled to Lhasa in disguise) and the former Head of the British Legation in Peking, Sir John Jordan.¹⁸

The piece can be read on several levels, not least as a classic piece of imperial writing: the celebration of a nostalgic gathering in the clubbable atmosphere of the imperial centre. But it also demonstrates the revealed knowledge of Tibet at that time and how the imperial officers responsible for relations with Tibet disseminated that to the 'educated public'. The image which they present is of Tibet as a country of unusual character and idiosyncrasies, but overall a worthy British ally, cultured, well-governed, and a progressive entity cautiously joining the modern world. That image became hegemonic, but the extent to which its essential purpose was to serve British interests has only recently emerged.

In regard to the modern Shangri-La image of Tibet, three comments by Sir John Jordan are particularly worthy of note. It was Korea, not Tibet, that then held the image of being a 'Hermit Kingdom'; while in a premature obituary Jordan concluded that the "glamour has departed" from the "Far East". But he was more prescient in discussing Tibet, suggesting that "the day may come when there will be some trouble over it".

* * *

The year that Charles Bell spent in Lhasa in 1920-1 can be seen to have marked the high point of British influence in Tibet. As Political Officer for Sikkim, Bhutan and Tibet when the Dalai Lama arrived in India in 1910, Bell's duty had been to cultivate the friendship of the Dalai Lama in order to influence him to follow policies beneficial to British interests. Bell succeeded in this task and apparently exerted a considerable influence on the Dalai Lama's thinking in regard to secular matters. In the 1913-23 period Tibet strengthened its tax collection system, increased the size of its army, established a police force in Lhasa, despatched four Tibetan youths to Britain for schooling, and reformed the administration in eastern Tibet. These were all policies that Bell had urged the Dalai Lama to adopt, and the fact that the Tibetan leader regularly wrote to Bell asking for political advice – even after Bell's retirement – suggests that he took much of Bell's advice in regard to the modernization of Tibet.

The security of India was always the primary concern of the British Government of India and the imperial government generally supported the modernization of Tibet under the rule of the Dalai Lama in the belief that a strong, united Tibet offered the best guarantee of a stable and secure northern border for British India. Thus they supplied weapons to Tibet on several occasions during the 1913-47 period, not least in the immediate aftermath of Tibet's handover of Tawang, and they provided the Tibetan army with military training. They also assisted Tibet with various technical projects and supplied British personnel to explore mineral prospects, operate radio communications, and establish English schools. In return for this assistance the British expected the Tibetans to heed the 'advice' of the Government of India in the form of the British Political Officer.

But the Dalai Lama was clearly open to alternative associations, having received a mission from the Kansu provincial government in 1919 which is generally assumed by European historians to have represented central government interests. The Tibetan leader was a strong-willed and independent individual, whose dealings with the British were inspired by his desire for British support in maintaining Tibet's independence from China. His endorsement of modernization must be seen in the context of his desire to strengthen Tibet rather than unquestioning acceptance of British advice.

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Three articles focusing on aspects of Tibet's modernization are included here. Alastair Lamb's succinct account of the four Tibetan youths sent to Rugby school in Britain (Chapter 99), Tsering Shakya's chronicle of the Tibetan enquiries into the possibility of their joining the League of Nations (Chapter 100), and John Bray's history of the first Tibetan-language newspaper (albeit one published in Ladakh) (Chapter 101). Both Lamb and Shakya confirm that the Tibetans were actively exploring a variety of avenues by which to attain international recognition of their independence and to guard that status against China. Their efforts to do so, although ultimately fruitless, went well beyond the confines of British advice and control.

The modernization process operates at different social levels and both Lamb and Bray's articles highlight modernizing forces outside direct state control. Foreign news and ideas reached the literate sections of Tibetan society through external agents such as education and newspapers, influences that acted at a subtle level often obscured in historical primary sources. The results were apparent, however, during the 1920s and 1930s, with the development of a Tibetan form of Westernized middle class, largely composed of members of the elite and bureaucratic classes who adopted elements of Western culture such as dress and diet. While in many ways strongly nationalist, this group looked to imperial Calcutta as a cultural centre and mixed freely with Western visitors. With a broader than traditional world view, this group might have acted as a force for state modernity, but they were not a revolutionary class in terms of challenging the established political structures. They tended to adopt the more superficial and hedonistic aspects of Western modernity and collectively failed to develop an intellectual or ideological alternative to the traditional Tibetan socio-political models.¹⁹

During the years 1913–23, the nascent Tibetan state followed a general model of development. Within the extreme financial constraints imposed by their archaic revenue-raising structures, Tibet gradually modernized its secular institutions including its military forces, resulting in the introduction of a new, briefly significant force in Tibetan society. These changes aroused tremendous opposition among conservative elements of Tibetan society, while indigenous cultural beliefs, such as that mining disturbed the spirits of the earth, made the adoption of many aspects of the Western development model problematic. But the process of modernization was still in motion late in 1923, when an English school was opened in Gyantse.²⁰ Within a year, however, Tibet had changed course, largely abandoning government-sponsored modernization and subtly moving away from close relations with British India.

There has been considerable debate over the rationale for the Dalai Lama's change of course, a move of immense significance for Tibet's future. The cessation of the ruling Gelugpa incarnate lineage in Urga and the establishment of the Mongolian Republic in 1924 might have suggested that a similar fate awaited Tibet. British failure to supply weaponry, or to obtain China's assent to the Simla Convention, or even an overall decline in British power in the East have also been suggested as causes, along with those argued in articles included here. The possibility that economic strictures were of crucial importance is a factor yet to be examined, part of a general neglect of the whole area of economic history in Tibetan studies.²¹

Our consideration of this issue begins with Melvyn Goldstein's analysis of the 1920s policy change (Chapter 102), which is the most thorough account of the period. His conclusion that the Dalai Lama centralized power in his own hands after abandoning modernization is of wider interest, given that the process of modernization is normally

associated with the centralization of power. Goldstein points out that ultimately, in weakening the military forces of Tibet, the events of the 1920s compounded the danger from China.

Peter Hansen takes a cultural approach to the problem. His article (Chapter 103), discusses this issue in the context of the construction of perceptions and images of Tibet, arguing that Anglo-Tibetan cultural encounters “redefined power outside traditional frameworks”. He concludes that tensions created by encounters such as the British Everest Expeditions, in particular the effects of the public display of films taken on these expeditions, along with the furore over the ‘Dancing Lamas’ who performed publicly in England in 1924, led Tibet to turn away from Britain. Hansen also identifies Tibetan agency in their offering limited resistance to British power at times when China offered no immediate threat, and in their effectively granting Everest expedition permits in exchange for arms supplies.

My own contribution (Chapter 104), presents the case for there having been an attempted coup in Lhasa in 1924 at the behest of Major F. M. Bailey, who had succeeded Bell as British Political Officer in Sikkim. We know that the Dalai Lama did come to suspect that such a coup had been planned and I argue that in order to ensure the continuing modernization of Tibet under British influence, Bailey was prepared to replace the Dalai Lama as secular leader of Tibet with Tsarong Shape, Commander-in-Chief of the Tibetan military forces. In the wider sense my intention was to demonstrate the obvious, but often ignored point that British Indian Tibet policy was not founded on altruism, but had the usual diplomatic aims of the defence and promotion of (British) national interests.

Another event of critical importance to the future of Tibet in this period was the 6th Panchen Lama’s flight into exile in Mongolia in November 1923. The immediate cause of his flight was the new taxation demands imposed on Shigatse in order to fund Tibetan military expansion and recover the cost of the fighting with China in 1917–18. But the event had earlier roots in Lhasa–Shigatse rivalry, and the dispute was never resolved. The Panchen Lama found support from China and until his death in 1937 his threatened return to Tibet with an armed Chinese escort was a shadow over Tibetan affairs.

Fabienne Jagou’s article (Chapter 105) focuses on the Panchen Lama’s travels in exile, filling a lacuna which still remains in regard to much of the 13th Dalai Lama’s periods in exile. She reveals the complex interplay of religious and secular duties that had also been a feature of the Lhasa incarnation’s exile. Particularly noteworthy is the evidence that the Dalai Lama may well have approved the Panchen’s flight – and that the pursuit party sent out after him allowed him to escape. But his flight upset the traditional power balance between the two incarnations. One immediate result was that most of the districts previously under Shigatse’s control passed to the administrative control of Lhasa – further evidence of the centralization of power in this period. Yet the Panchen Lama’s loss of secular position did not affect his religious standing. He continued to enjoy considerable support in areas such as Amdo, where he passed his last two years,²² and he even assisted the Tibetan government in the search for the new incarnation of the Dalai Lama in the 1930s.

During the 1920s, the new Soviet government sent agents to renew contact between Tibet and Russia. These Bolshevik missions to Lhasa are the subject of an article here by Alex Andreyev (Chapter 106), which draws on recently released Soviet sources. Tibet itself did not prove fertile ground for the spreading of communist doctrines

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– the essential class struggle was lacking and there was no apparent social ferment on which to build revolution. But in an echo of the Tsarist era ‘Great Game’, the new Russian forces articulated the goal of expelling the British from Asia, with Tibet seeming a useful channel for subverting the Indian border regions. Even Dorzhiev re-emerged on the scene, albeit under communist pressure. Tibet remained open to the possibility of support from Russia, and did apparently obtain some arms from Russia, but they were well informed about the persecution of Russian Buddhists under communism, and ultimately rejected the Soviet efforts.

Questions remain as to whether the list of Soviet agents at that time included the names of the artist and Tibetanist Nicholas Roerich, or his son George, a Harvard trained linguist²³ (who chose to return to the USSR in 1959). While barely fitting the parameters of this volume, Central Asian specialist Robert Rupen’s wide-ranging article concerning the Roerichs (Chapter 107) contains several intriguing elements. While several of his sources are now known to be unreliable, the article is included here to demonstrate a specific example of the kind of cross-cultural encounters and blurred identities which were characteristic of the Tibetan encounter with the outside world. Roerich’s brand of ‘Neo-Buddhism’, for example, fitted into a stream of Western interpretations of ‘true Buddhism’ which had close links with Theosophy, and later with ‘New Age Buddhism’. In addition, Roerich’s belief in Mongolia and Tibet as a “Buddhist cultural unit” incorporated elements of the ‘Greater Mongol Buddhist state’ idea promoted by Dorzhiev and others.

L. M. King (Chapter 94), describes the Tibetans as viewing Western ideas in the same way that the British authorities of his time viewed communism – as an alien ideology which would destroy their civilization. Christian missionaries posed a particular threat to Tibetan culture and, as the article by John Bray (Chapter 108) describes, by the late nineteenth century the missionaries were active all around Tibet’s borders. But, after Huc and Gabet in the 1860s, none were permitted to reach the urban centres of Tibet and occasional attacks on missionaries and mission stations on the eastern Tibetan frontier indicated the strength of Tibetan opposition to them. Even the British Indian government recognized this and in their efforts to ally Tibet with India they were forced to tacitly acquiesce to their exclusion. The frustrated missionaries came to believe that their best hope for admittance into Tibet was if that land came under the control of foreign powers more hospitable to Christian proselytizing. This meant that the missionaries on the eastern Tibetan frontier came to identify their interests with the Chinese attempts to conquer Tibet. The result was naturally to further alienate the Tibetans from missionary endeavours.

A brief account by one missionary of a visit to the sacred mountain of Kailas in western Tibet in 1916 is included here (Chapter 109). The author, Yunas Singh, also known as ‘Saddhu Singh’, was a convert from Hinduism to Christianity and one of the more unusual characters prominent on the Indo-Tibetan frontier at that time. He eventually vanished in Tibet on a journey in the early 1920s and became something of a symbol of Christian martyrdom there. While the accounts of travellers are otherwise absent from these volumes, Singh’s simple tale of his journey – written for fellow-missionaries – provides an interesting illustration of both a prosaic Christian missionary perspective on Tibetan culture and the blurring of identities in the frontier regions.

* * *

In the early 1930s, there were indications that in the face of threats from China in the east the Dalai Lama was again turning to British India for support. But in 1931 the Nechung Oracle had expressed concern over the Dalai Lama's health and advised the Tibetan government to offer prayers for his well-being. The Dalai Lama made a written reply, which became known as his *Kachem* ('Last Testament'), for on Sunday, 17 December 1933, after a period of worsening health, the 13th Dalai Lama 'passed to the heavenly fields'.

The 'Last Testament' is included here in a translation published by Sir Charles Bell in 1946 (Chapter 110). While the full extent of its foresight was not then clear, it can now be seen as an extraordinarily prescient document. In it, the Dalai Lama called upon his subjects to act in order to avert future tragedies, warning that:

Unless we guard our own country . . . monasteries and the monks and nuns . . . will be destroyed . . . [while] officers of the State . . . will find . . . themselves made to serve their enemies, or wander about the country as beggars do. All beings will be sunk in great hardship and in overpowering fear; the days and nights will drag on slowly in suffering.

The 'Last Testament' begins with the Dalai Lama summarizing his career, offering, on the Buddhist literary model, a modest account of his qualifications and his actions in ruling Tibet, 'the field of religion'. The collapse of Chinese power in Tibet in 1911 is described in *karmic* terms, with the "full ripening of the evil deeds of the Chinese" brought forth by Tibetan prayers. Then, implying that his own life would soon end, the Dalai Lama warned of the dangers surrounding Tibet's future; in particular the threat from the "red people", the communists whose attack on the Buddhist religion in Mongolia was a precedent for Tibet's future. Calling on the Tibetans to unite against the threat to their welfare, the Testament warned of attacks "from the outside and from the inside".

Charles Bell's biography of the Dalai Lama discusses rumours of his having been poisoned by medicine given at the instigation of the spirit of a Nyarong incarnation (*sprul-sku*) associated with the disbanded Tengyeling monastery.²⁴ Rumours of poisoning seem to have attended the death of most important Tibetan leaders although the truth of such insinuations is generally impossible to establish. But in the chapter here by K. Dhondup (Chapter 111), further indication is given of the intense rivalry and factionalism which we have noted as characteristically surrounding a Dalai Lama's court. This extract from Dhondup's passionate history of the 13th Dalai Lama's period – which was not approved for publication by the Tibetan government-in-exile in Dharamsala²⁵ – focuses on the three major personalities in Tibetan politics in the 1920s and early 1930s: Tsarong, Lungshar and Kunphela. We are far from Shangri-La as Dhondup describes the activities of these three players in "the political jungle of Lhasa . . . infested by the most unscrupulous and ambitious minds".

Tsarong Shapé, whose many government posts included that of Commander-in-Chief of the Tibetan army from 1913 to 1924, is generally accepted as the greatest of modern Tibet's secular figures. Western and exile Tibetan historiography concerning Tsarong Shapé is almost entirely uncritical, and he emerges in the historical literature as a heroic figure, whose gradual eclipse following the events of 1924 was, as Dhondup concludes here, the end of Tibet's best hopes for the future.

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Without denying his heroic stature and important historical role, some reassessment of Tsarong may be overdue. His rise from humble class origins, personal bravery, and the appeal that his straightforward personality and openness to 'modernist' thinking had to the many Western visitors with whom he came in contact meant that he was heavily promoted in contemporary European literature and British imperial sources. But these do not represent the range of Tibetan perspectives, and given that he must be considered partly responsible for the failure to integrate a modernized Tibetan military within the traditional structures of Tibetan society, a more balanced analysis of Tsarong may be overdue.

Lungshar, who inherited much of Tsarong's power, was a complex figure. In Dhondup's conclusion he was "an extremely brilliant" individual with progressive tendencies, but also a "diabolical genius" whose primary motive was personal ambition. Lungshar proved a more adept politician than Tsarong, gaining early support from elements within both the military and the monastic sections of Tibetan society. But his rise and fall had all the elements of Shakespearean tragedy. After the Dalai Lama's death he was briefly the leading figure in Tibetan secular affairs, dominating the weak Reting Regent and establishing a strongly nationalist political base. But he alienated the aristocracy and was suspected by the monasteries of republican tendencies. In 1934 he was arrested at a meeting in the Potala. In an echo of the events surrounding the attempted assassination of the Dalai Lama in 1899, Lungshar was found guilty of practising 'black magic' against the Regent and leading members of the Kashag. He was imprisoned and blinded.

The third of Dhondup's subjects, Kuchar Kunphela, was a monk-attendant of the 13th Dalai Lama.²⁶ Of humble origin and with no official rank, he was promoted above Lungshar in the late 1920s and early 1930s. But in attempting to build a military power base through the creation of an elite regiment he alienated the aristocracy. After the death of his great patron, Kunphela and his supporters were arrested at Lungshar's instigation, and Kunphela was exiled.

The removal of these three outstanding figures from power in the 1930s meant, in Dhondup's conclusion, that "Out of this short and exciting period of dissent and confusion emerged an unimpressive and mutilated government that was to waste itself dry under the rule of the Regents." In the virtual absence of in-depth studies of the internal politics of Tibet in the early 1940s, this indigenous critique of the final years of Tibetan self-government stands as valid.

Dhondup's 1986 work was followed in 1989 by Melvyn Goldstein's most controversial work, *A History of Modern Tibet, 1913-1951*, which is essential reading on this period. Goldstein's work has been strongly criticized by some reviewers (in particular those associated with Dharamsala) for a perceived pro-Chinese bias. But his most significant conclusion (included here as Chapter 112) was that the rapid collapse of the Tibetan state in 1950 was largely due to the actions of the conservative Tibetan monastic elites in the 1920s and 1930s. Seeing their role as the preservation of their religious culture and structures, they prevented the modernization of Tibet, in particular its military forces, and insisted on the appointment of the easily manipulated Reting incarnation as Regent, with disastrous consequences. Goldstein concludes that Lungshar, despite his faults, represented Tibet's last hope for the implementation of necessary reforms. His overthrow cemented the supreme power of the monastic elements during the last years of a free Tibet, effectively suppressing any hopes of reform.

While also justly criticizing the British and independent India for their failure to offer Tibet any support in 1950, Goldstein's thesis is summed up by his statement included herein, that:

Ironically, by trying to protect Tibet's cherished Buddhist values and ideology from possible contamination by Western institutions, the monastic and religious conservatives created a set of conditions whereby the government was unable to defend and preserve those very religious values from the Chinese Communists.

Little purpose is served by the 'What if?'s of history. A fully-modernized and heavily armed Tibetan state would still have been incapable of resisting a full-scale Chinese invasion, while guerrilla warfare on the Vietcong model would have required not only a unified response and leadership among the resistance (something that was lacking), but also more significant long-term support from the outside world than that offered by the CIA and its allies in the subcontinent during the period from the late 1950s to 1971.

Yet in apportioning blame, Goldstein was developing ideas which had emerged within Tibetan scholarship as much as Western²⁷ and his central thesis remains firmly undemolished. Much of the opposition Goldstein has attracted has been due to his controversial use of specific terms such as 'serf' in regard to Tibetan peasantry. Yet in avoiding the privileging of Tibet or Tibetan culture and society in any way, in demanding that we examine Tibetan history with the critical standards required of the historical discipline, and in challenging our perception of Tibetan society through the use of such terms as 'purge' rather than 'dismiss' in regard to the removal of 'pro-British' military officers from the Tibetan army in the 1920s, Goldstein has revolutionized Tibetan studies. He has led a 'de-mythologization' movement that has brought new critical approaches to the 'Shangri-La' image of Tibet.

In his emphasis on, or at least revelation of, divisions within Tibetan society, Goldstein's work can be seen by the Tibetan independence movement as detrimental to their cause, in that such divisions may serve Chinese interests. But his work has paved the way for a shift in Tibetan exile historiography, enabling critiques of the 'traditional' leadership and system, while in the wider academic sphere his investigation of issues of power within Tibetan society has contributed to greater understanding of that polity and to the emergence of new models of the traditional Tibetan society. The danger of this approach is, of course, that it leads to an emphasis on that which divided Tibetans rather than to a balanced appraisal of their unity.

But it is perhaps in his acknowledgement of the international communities' acceptance of the legality of Chinese rule in Tibet, his critiques of the exile government's policies towards the issue, and his location of the sufferings of Tibet within the wider context of the sufferings of the Chinese people under communism that Goldstein has most obviously alienated elements of his subject culture. Only time will tell if he has not under-estimated the power of contemporary revolutionary nationalist movements to achieve long-term goals in the face of colonial exploitation and suppression. But in representing the reformist tendency in Tibetan society, as against the more common – indeed previously hegemonic – representations deriving from the Western alliance with the Lhasa Gelugpa elite powers, Goldstein's influence has been

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paramount. He has not only stimulated productive debate, but also contributed to a more balanced and pragmatic understanding of the realities of Tibetan society, rather than the ideal.

* * *

Tibet did not entirely escape the effects of Europe's descent into the Second World War. The conflict led to the presence of an increased number of Westerners in Lhasa, beginning with a Nazi German mission to Lhasa in 1938–9, under Himmler's patronage, which succeeded in establishing friendly ties with the Regent. Two other Germans escaping from British India arrived later, one of whom, Heinrich Harrer, has had an enormous influence on the popular understanding of Tibet through his best-selling *Seven Years in Tibet*, a work which deserves academic recognition and analysis of its images. The Americans also established official ties with Tibet during the Second World War, ties that were to culminate in CIA support for the Tibetan resistance movement in the 1950s.

Two incarnate monks, the Reting and Taktsa Rinpoches, served as Regents of Tibet in the interval between the rule of the 13th and 14th Dalai Lamas. The young Reting Regent resigned in 1941, but attempted to regain his power in 1947, when a failed coup d'état brought to a head simmering tensions between the two. This important incident is described here by Hugh Richardson (Chapter 113), who was present in Lhasa at that time in his capacity as Head of the British Mission. In describing the Reting incarnation as a man to whom "money mattered more than principle or conviction", Richardson draws attention to the materialistic atmosphere of Lhasa at that time. In the absence of a ruling Dalai Lama, and with enormous profits available from wartime trading, the hedonistic and materialistic elements of Tibetan society were particularly prominent in the 1940s. This can only be seen as unexpected when viewed from the Shangri-La perspective! The clash between religious ideals and material opportunity is rarely if ever resolved in harmonious balance in any religion or culture, and there is no reason to imagine the Tibetans should be different in this regard.²⁸

We then turn from coups, conspiracy and intrigue to an aspect of Tibetan history in which the metaphysical was a major element, an event in which Western rationalist concepts of time and individual existence were almost entirely absent: the report of the discovery of a new incarnation of the Dalai Lama and his installation at Lhasa (Chapter 114). Even the then British Political Officer, Basil (later Sir Basil) Gould, who was charged with the prosaic duty of reporting these events to the imperial government, found it difficult to suspend belief entirely. He wrote that "It was very evident that . . . [this] was indeed the return, in response to prayer, of the Dalai Lama to a throne, which by inherent authority was already his" – a comment which must have raised the eyebrows of his imperial superiors!

Yet even here, in the account of these events in the early life of the (current) 14th Dalai Lama, politics are far from absent, with the presence of a rival Chinese mission in Lhasa leading to diplomatic competition for Tibetan favour. Gould's sympathetic description of the processes involved in the search for and recognition of the new Dalai Lama has been the basis of many accounts of the process, but is published here for the first time. To it is appended Alastair Lamb's analysis of the document. This

draws attention to the political background of the report and suggests that the Chinese actually diplomatically outmanoeuvred Gould, excluding him from the most significant ceremony of the installation.²⁹ The Tibetans' aims and perspectives on this issue remain unclear.

There are surprisingly few academic studies devoted specifically to Tibet in the 1940s. The reader may turn to numerous first-hand accounts of the period by Western visitors and residents, which await analysis as a historical genre in regard to the socio-political situation in Tibet at that time.³⁰ But much work remains to be done on our understanding of the final years of the self-governing Tibetan polity, when the Tibetans renewed their efforts to gain outside support against the growing threat from China. The gradual emergence of documents pertaining to the involvement of the American CIA in Central Asian affairs in this period may lead to very different understandings of events and responses there.

Tsering Shakya (Chapter 115), describes a major initiative, the 1948 Tibetan trade mission to Britain and the USA, which demonstrated the increasing sophistication of Tibetan diplomacy. As the previously unpublished document included here (Chapter 116), concerning the visit to Tibet by Mr J. E. Reid in 1950 succinctly confirms, Tibet had begun to seek its place in the modern world and to prepare to defend itself against China. But as the following article by Shakya (Chapter 117), reveals, these were the last days of a free Tibet.

In October 1949, the new communist government took power in Peking and proclaimed its intention to 'liberate' those parts of Tibet under the rule of the Dalai Lama. Negotiations proved fruitless and Chinese forces invaded Tibet from the east on 7 October 1950. They rapidly overcame the defending army and forced Lhasa to accept Chinese authority. Shakya's article, which draws on sources unavailable to the earlier scholarship of Goldstein and other writers on the subject, sets these events in their wider regional context, noting China's simultaneous deployment of troops in Tibet and in Korea, as American forces there crossed the 38th Parallel.

Negotiations then took place in Peking, resulting in the signing in May 1951 of the Sino-Tibetan 'Seventeen Point Agreement' (included here as Chapter 118), by which China took over Tibet. Ironically, and in line with the Goldstein thesis, the conservative Tibetan monastic elements accepted the agreement on the grounds that it would (in theory) secure their system and maintain their privileges. Like so many of Tibet's international treaties, debate surrounds the validity of this Agreement under international law. In that it was clearly signed by the Tibetans under duress and was subsequently repudiated by the Tibetan government it probably remains invalid.³¹ But, as Shakya notes, it is claimed by the Chinese as "the legal and historical basis for Chinese rule in Tibet".

During the 1950s China struggled to enforce her authority in Tibet. While the Tibetan Government attempted to co-operate with the Chinese, popular resistance to Chinese imperialism grew. As resistance fighting became widespread in the east of Tibet, conditions deteriorated to the point where Lhasa was destabilized by the presence of refugees and large numbers of Chinese troops. Our history ends in that year of 1959, when fears that the Chinese troops intended to kidnap the Dalai Lama led to his fleeing into exile. Ironically, Tawang monastery was his first refuge in India.

Studies are beginning to emerge that examine the history of what is now the Tibetan Autonomous Region (TAR) in the post-1959 period and it is clear that the

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destruction of Tibet's traditional culture and ruling structures by the Chinese has radically altered the nature of that society. Without denying the historicity of the TAR and its population, the essential elements of any major consideration of the post-1959 period concern human rights and the anti-colonial struggle of the Tibetan people, as well as their responses and ongoing modes of accommodation with, and resistance to, Chinese rule. 1959 is thus a convenient point at which to end these volumes.

Since 1959 the Dalai Lama and his followers have established a thriving Tibetan government-in-exile in Dharamsala (India), and have promoted the spread of their Buddhist faith throughout the Western, and Eastern, world. But despite such recognition of the Tibetan cause as the award of the 1989 Nobel Peace Prize to the Dalai Lama, the Tibetan problem remains unsolved, and will remain so while Tibet remains a colony.

The Tibetans who have remained in their homeland have suffered enormously under Chinese colonialism, with massive loss of life through famine, political repression and the violent destruction of their culture and way of life. While the worst excesses occurred during the 1960s and 1970s (a period when many Chinese also suffered enormously under communism), China has continued to exploit Tibet as a colony and to imprison, torture and kill Tibetans who seek even the most basic of human rights. China has been able to rely on the greed of foreign governments, who prefer the possibility of profit in trade with China to action in support of democratic and human rights. As Charles Bell wrote in 1946:

[W]e are always being told about the vast potentialities of trade with China. To my recollection we were told this fifty years ago, but during those fifty years no such vast development has materialised; the potentialities are still no more than potentialities. However, the foreign nations wish to gain a good share of this trade, and to that end try to please China. But it is an outrage that they should sell Tibet in order to increase their own commercial profits in China.³²

But in the present political climate Tibet is of little importance to the outside world in comparison with the strategic and geo-political significance of China. In the short term the outlook for Tibetan self-expression is bleak. In the future Tibetan resistance will continue to manifest in many forms. Despite the centrality of non-violent resistance to the policies of the 14th Dalai Lama, that position derives far more from Mahatma Gandhi's influence than from Tibetan tradition. Many Tibetans doubt its value, and non-violence may not remain the Tibetan position throughout the twenty-first century.

As the article here by Tibetan intellectual Jamyang Norbu (Chapter 119), indicates, armed resistance to China, particularly by the peoples of Kham and Amdo, was a prominent feature of the 1950s. Norbu emphasizes both the ideological nature of that revolt and its broad social support base. Resistance was in defence of Tibetan Buddhist values, and even merchants who had profited from the Chinese presence none the less funded and led the resistance.

The lack of support that the Tibetan government's policy of co-operation with the Chinese enjoyed among the general population is indicated by the popular nature

of the 1950s revolt. But a lack of unity weakened the resistance movement. Norbu concludes that regional and tribal loyalties among its members prevented the revolt from taking on “a fully national and dynamic character”; a conclusion with important implications for our understanding of Tibetan identity.

Norbu’s work has been recently supplemented by several important studies of the 1950s that have appeared too late for inclusion here.³³ They indicate the wide extent of the Tibetan resistance movement in that period and reveal previously underestimated support for their struggle from Nehru’s India, as well as their links with the CIA from the late 1950s to the early 1970s. We may expect that this period will provide a new focus within Tibetan studies for some time to come.

* * *

The final contributions to this volume concern the issue of the construction of the Western understanding of Tibet. A history of Thailand or of Tonga might pass briefly over such an issue, but it is central to an understanding of our subject because two Tibets continue to co-exist in the popular Western understanding. One is a historical Tibet, a place fixed in time and space, the other is the mythical Tibet – Tibet as Shangri-La – which exists only within the human imagination. We are not concerned here with the mythical Tibet, but need to be aware that our understanding of Tibetan history can be affected by this mythical image. The Shangri-La myth penetrates into much of the historical literature, whether as text or sub-text, and has had an affect on the understanding of many – if not most – of the scholars who have laid the foundations of our knowledge of historical Tibet. If we are to gain a realistic understanding of Tibetan history, therefore, we need to understand the process by which our knowledge of the subject has taken form.

Much of the contemporary analysis of this issue is unduly ahistorical, with a postmodernist disregard for historical process, or it is located in theoretical boundaries and is largely self-reflective, concerned with the Western subject rather than the Tibetan object. There are political and Orientalist aspects to the construction of Tibet as Shangri-La, but these need to be located in their historical context. The negative images promoted by early European observers, for example, arise from specific intellectual and political conjunctions, which the historian must recognize. We also need to take into account the popular demand for Tibet as Shangri-La. There appears to be an almost universal human need for a realm of mythology, and that desire to imagine a place beyond the mundane needs analysis within the Tibetan context. There are also recognizable commercial interests behind the continuing existence of a mythical Tibet. Shangri-La sells, and there are implicit or explicit commercial pressures on even the most prosaic of observers to acknowledge the aura with which Tibet has been endowed in Western – and Eastern – mythology. Might it be possible to reconcile the mythical and the historical Tibet through a recognition and use of all of these elements?³⁴

The academic promotion of a more realistic understanding of Tibet has important consequences. In denying Tibetan agency, and locating Tibetans in a realm beyond worldly existence (and thus beyond suffering under colonialism), the Shangri-La image has become a grave liability to the Tibetan peoples. In the years following the Chinese invasion, the Tibetans’ association with the Shangri-La myth was of value in enabling them to gain access to Western media and thus publicize their cause. But if

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they have profited from the way in which the myth has raised their profile, they have suffered from its dehumanizing consequences. In locating a historical and political Tibet in the real world, we restore Tibetan agency and identity.

As detailed here in the early and trenchant critique by Agehananda Bharati (Chapter 120), who was himself European, in the 1950s academic supporters of Tibet employed a private investigator to identify 'Lobsang Rampa', the best-selling promoter of the Shangri-La image. He turned out to be an Englishman rather than a Tibetan monk, and to have had no association with Tibet. Today, promoters of such images tend to have a background of involvement in the practice of some form of Tibetan Buddhism, but their publications generally appear in the 'self-help' sections of our libraries rather than under 'Tibetan studies'. There they may serve a useful purpose in that field. But what is crucial is that when such 'authorities' describe, for example, Tibet as a country in which non-violence was so central an ideology that they were without an army,³⁵ scholarship demonstrates that such statements are nonsense. It is also important that Tibetans clearly distance themselves from these fallacies, however profitable they may prove to the individual.

Questions of Tibetan identity are integral to an analysis of the Shangri-La image, and the article here by the anthropologist Robert Ekvall (Chapter 121) marks the emergence of the modern analysis of this issue. While aspects of Ekvall's understanding of Tibetan Buddhism, in particular, have been criticized, his preliminary identification of the key elements of 'Tibetanness' remains historically significant.

The scholarship that informs our historical understanding of Tibet is, as we have noted, a product of specific political and ideological contexts. A significant example of this is the extent to which it has been influenced by politically based constructions by British Indian officials such as Sir Charles Bell, as demonstrated in the article here by McKay (Chapter 122). As part of their policy of developing Tibet as a strong, united, buffer state protecting the security of India's northern border, Bell and his fellow-officers emphasized those aspects of Tibet which promoted that construct. Their association with, and support for, the Dalai Lama and his government as the best guarantee of stability within Tibet meant that their work largely represents the perspective of the Lhasa Gelugpa elites and marginalizes the perspectives of other elements of Tibetan society, perspectives only now being recovered.

In a specific refutation of a particular myth (Chapter 123), I have used the British records of those who crossed the Indo-Tibetan frontier to demonstrate that in the 1904–47 period Tibet was visited by well over a thousand Europeans. This was far more than the number that visited other Himalayan and Central Asian states such as Bhutan, Nepal and Mongolia, which were thus, in this sense, far more isolated and 'forbidden' than Tibet.

The Shangri-La debate has been particularly informed by the scholarship of Don Lopez, whose increasingly sophisticated analysis culminated in his 1998 work *Prisoners of Shangri-La*. That book analysed the construction of a number of specific aspects of the mythical image of Tibet and the chapter concerning the development of Tibetan Buddhist Studies as an academic field in North America since 1959 is reproduced here (Chapter 124). While outside the chronological parameters of these volumes, the work is essential reading for an understanding of the academic construction of Tibet, not least the extent to which the perspectives of the Gelugpa sect continue to dominate contemporary representations of Tibet.

In a second article included here (Chapter 125), Lopez also examines the problems of such representation in terms of translating the oral traditions of Tibetan Buddhism into Western academic language. After identifying key influences in the Western historical study of Tibetan Buddhism, Lopez switches to an autobiographical mode to discuss issues arising from his doctoral fieldwork in a Tibetan monastery in India. Working within the Western academic traditions of Buddhology, he was forced to negotiate between two traditions, the Western one privileging text, and the Tibetan one in which authority rested in oral transmission; albeit that those teachings had a textual source. While this is an article reflecting primarily upon the Western academic tradition, it raises significant issues, consideration of which cannot fail to be of benefit to any Tibetanist, or indeed, any student of a foreign culture.

This volume closes with an article by Frank Korom (Chapter 126), whose concern is with the New Age image of Tibet and that construction of Tibetan spirituality. Korom locates the origins of the New Age in the utopian social movements of the nineteenth century and discusses its contemporary manifestations. The importance of this article to the history of Tibet lies, as does the work of Lopez, in its precise demonstration of how our knowledge of Tibet has taken form, and the areas of its relationship to and of the paths of divergence from the Buddhism of Tibet as understood and practised by Tibetans.

The works selected in this final section are designed to demonstrate, therefore, the extent to which our knowledge of Tibet is influenced by the positions of those who present it. In studying Tibet, we need to be constantly aware of the ideological standpoint of our sources, Tibetan or otherwise, and of the nature of the interests that they represent, explicitly or implicitly. Each source represents a different history and, as we have noted, there is no one History of Tibet; Tibet has as many histories as it has historians.

* * *

Certain features of modern Tibetan history emerge strongly in this volume. It is clear, for example, that although British sources emphasize Tibet's alliance with British India, the Tibetan Government actively explored contacts with a number of other nations and centred their foreign policy in the 1913–47 period on the common strategy of small nations located between powerful empires: playing off their powerful neighbours against each other. But this tactic lacked the cosmological elements of the traditional Tibetan understanding of their foreign policy and their ultimate goal is likely to have remained the establishment of a *mchod yon* relationship to replace that which had existed with the Manchu dynasty.³⁶

The reactive nature of the policies of the imperial nations is characteristic of the period, with actions by one party inevitably drawing a response from the other(s). Thus the Younghusband mission was a response to Russo-Tibetan communications, while China's deployment of Chao Erh-feng and much of its extension of power in the Kham region during the 1905–10 period was a response to the Younghusband mission. Similarly, Bell's mission to Lhasa in 1920–1 was a response to the Kansu mission to Lhasa in 1919. Equally, the imperial Russian and British efforts to impose a division on Mongolia and Tibet informed each other. The concept of 'Inner' and 'Outer' zones was an artificial one, which neither adequately represented local and

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regional aspirations nor provided stable, long-term solutions to wider geo-political problems.

We have seen that the desire of Lhasa's authorities to centralize power in their hands is a consistent theme throughout Tibetan history. Just as the Yarlung dynasty kings sought to centralize power at the expense of the aristocracy, so too did the 13th Dalai Lama seek to concentrate power at the expense of regional forces. Resistance was naturally inherent in the process, and a certain historical balance ensued that provided internal stability to most Tibetan regions within the structures of state.

Certain issues emerge from a consideration of this period as ones requiring further study. Of particular importance is an analysis of the regional power structures within Sichuan and Yunnan, and of their historical relationships with Kham, Amdo and Lhasa. This needs to take into account the complex relationships between central, regional and district authorities – civil, military and religious – and their ideologies, strategies and actions in regard to Tibet and the ethnically Tibetan regions. The idea of a monolithic China is simply untenable during much of the first half of the twentieth century and must be replaced by more detailed insights. More economic studies of Tibet are also essential, and may contribute to our understanding of Asian identities. The Census-Tax-Sovereignty process is of particular interest as a potential tool for understanding constructions of sovereignty and the process of its assertion.

The Western academic concern with the imperial encounter with Tibet has meant that we know too little of internal socio-religious developments in the twentieth century. Yet in addition to the social impact of modernization, and of war, aspects such as the impact of Buddhist modernism and the influence of Mahatma Gandhi's theories on Tibetan exile political thought are important issues. So too is the question of public health, and working within the wider field of studies of the impact of Western medicine in Asia, we may draw on the British imperial medical records to consider the process by which Tibetans came to adopt, or to reject, that system. There is evidence that the Tibetans rapidly came to prefer Western medicine and that the survival of their traditional systems is linked rather to the current popularity of Tibetan medicine in the West.

The literary formula of the proclamations issued by the Dalai Lamas and other Tibetan authorities (and indeed, other state documents) might be analysed as a genre to refine our understanding of indigenous representations of 'Tibet' and 'Tibetanness'. This may serve as a preparatory step towards the wider project of translating 'traditional' Asian understandings of landscape and territory into Western formulations less restrictive and alien than demarcated frontiers and nation states. Such a reassessment of Sino-Tibetan and other Asian state relationships, producing new perspectives and new models of Asian polities, will refine our understanding of Tibet's political systems and its relations to that wider region.

Two elements that consistently appear in Tibetan histories are generally neglected by Western historians. The first is the issue of poisoning, rumours of which seem to have followed the death of major figures throughout Tibetan history. Poison was apparently considered a speciality of certain, mainly eastern Tibetan 'magicians' and the numerous references to poisons and poisoning in Tibetan Tantric texts, as well as in earlier Indian traditions, suggest the existence of a lineage of knowledge of these weapons, not necessarily within state control. The use of poison is certainly known in wider Central Asian history and the issue deserves attention.

The second point is the Tibetan government's use of omens and of the advice of the State Oracle(s). These enjoyed a strong influence in the state decision-making processes and are another example of aspects of the Tibetan system which are difficult to reconcile with Western political processes and understandings. The role of these elements in the formation of policy, including an analysis of the interests represented by the State Oracle, is overdue.

In a related area, however, recent works by Richardson and by Huber have laid the foundations for the study of the role of ritual and ceremony in Tibetan statecraft,³⁷ a subject which has important implications for the historical understanding of government and the representation of authority in Asia. To this may be added other symbolic expressions of power, such as a consideration of the role of architectural constructions in Tibetan history.

We may conclude these volumes by noting that Western popular and academic interest in our subject shows no sign of abating. Indeed the demand is increasing. We may expect, therefore, that the next century of Tibetan studies will bring us improved understandings at least equal to those gained during the past century. While the future political status of our subject is more difficult to predict, the unique nature of its culture and environment will ensure the lasting attraction of the land of 'High Peaks, Pure Earth'.

Notes

- 1 The Manchu Emperor sent the 'golden urn' to Lhasa in 1793. The intention was that the names of candidates for the position of Dalai Lama (and other high posts) would be placed in it, with the Lhasa Amban drawing out the name of a candidate, who was then recognized as the new incarnation. The use, or otherwise, of this urn is now seen as an important symbol of the extent to which the Manchu Emperors actually exercised authority over the Tibetan religious state.
- 2 The death penalty was abolished around 1898. Isolated cases of capital punishment did, however, take place in later years, generally for offences which might be termed treasonable; see, for example, M. Goldstein, *A History of Modern Tibet, 1913–1951: The Demise of the Lamaist State* (London/Berkeley: University of California Press, 1989), pp. 126–30 in regard to the death of Padma Chandra. But for an example of a more despotic kind, see Oriental and India Office Collection (hereafter OIOC), L/P&S/7/251, in regard to the execution of a youth involved in stealing the western Tibetan administrator's horse. It must not be forgotten that corporal punishment continued to be inflicted for numerous offences and often proved fatal. A critical study of the Tibetan legal system and application of justice is required.
- 3 A certain subjectivity must apply to such judgement, and conditions on the Tibetan periphery were clearly less ideal than those in the central regions. See, for example, the execution in western Tibet referred to in note 2. None the less, the judgement stands.
- 4 See J. Snelling, *Buddhism in Russia: The Story of Agvan Dorzhiev, Lhasa's Emissary to the Tsar* (Shaftsbury, UK, Element Books, 1993), p. 40. The date is Snelling's, and while it may be correct, it is not supported by his sources. Dorzhiev reported the factionalism at the court to his Russian associates; *ibid.*, p. 41, quoting British Parliamentary Papers, 1904, vol. 67, Cmd. 1920, No. 34: Sir C. Scott to the Marquess of Lansdowne, July 1st 1901, 2nd Enclosure; 'Another interview with M. Badmeyerff'.
- 5 Bell states that "it must be admitted that the penalties inflicted on the chief offenders were, according to Western ideas, perhaps worse than death." Bell reports that the Regent, while escaping torture, soon died in prison; C. A. Bell, *Portrait of a Dalai Lama* (New York: Wisdom, 1984), p. 62. Goldstein states that the Regent was drowned in a water vat while under house arrest and that his two principal co-conspirators also died or were killed in prison: Goldstein, *A History* . . . , pp. 42–3. See also K. Dhondup, *The Water-Bird and Other Years*

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- (Delhi: Rangwang Publishers, 1986), p. 8, where he states that “16 Bon priests were also punished” – suggesting the magic involved was drawn from Bön traditions and raising questions as to the Bön-po perspective on the Tibetan system at that time. However Goldstein, who made extensive use of Tibetan oral sources, states that a ‘lama’ from Nyarong used “the deity Shinje Tsheda [*gshin rje tshe bdag*] in his black mantric rites”, and he makes no mention of the Bon-po.
- 6 Snelling, *Buddhism*.
 - 7 A number of scholars (including several in this volume), have used the work of Wilhelm Filchener as a historical source, although in general they have noted doubts over the veracity of his account of the activities of Russian agent ‘Zerimpil’, often identified with Dorzhiev, but sometimes accepted as a separate agent. However, Filchener, a respected German scientist and himself an intelligence agent, admitted that the work was fiction: OIOC, MSS Eur D979, Ludlow Papers, diary entry of F. Ludlow.
 - 8 The precise legal definition of the term ‘suzerain’ remains in dispute; see, for example, the various discussions in M. C. van Walt van Praag, *The Status of Tibet: History, Rights, and Prospects in International Law* (London: Westview Press, 1987).
 - 9 In 1911, while the Dalai Lama was in exile in India, the Panchen Lama sent a messenger to the British Political Officer, Charles Bell, who was responsible for the Dalai Lama, to ask Bell whether he (the Panchen), should take up the Dalai Lama’s religious duties; see OIOC, L/P&S/7/247–627, Bell to India, 13 March 1911.
 - 10 The Dalai Lama had planned to return to Tibet in April 1906 at the request of the Tibetan Government, but Chinese officials in Lhasa did not want him back, at least until they had subdued Tibet; see Goldstein, *A History*, pp. 48–9.
 - 11 Early in 1909, Charles Bell reported that the Dalai Lama had gained the support of the Mongol Chiefs and was ‘confident of gaining their support in the event of a rupture with China’; OIOC, L/P&S/7/229–923, Gyantse Annual Report, April 1908 – March 1909.
 - 12 While it is often stated that all Chinese were expelled from Tibet, several (Buddhist) soldiers who defected to the Tibetan side are known to have remained, and low-level traders or peasants were apparently also exempt. W. D. Shakabpa, *Tibet: A Political History* (New York: Potala Publications, 1984), p. 249, states that long-term Chinese residents in Lhasa who had not sided with the Chinese forces were neither punished nor expelled.
 - 13 Shakabpa, *ibid.*, p. 262, records that Monks of Loseling college of Drepung who were implicated by documents found in Tengyelung were also punished. His chronology is unclear. Dhondup, *The Water-Bird*, p. 45, however, records that the major Tibetan collaborators had been executed in April 1912, when Sera monks and army officers under the command of the Tibetan War Department broke into a meeting of the Cabinet at the Potala, and executed at least six officials.
 - 14 Professor Turrell Wylie assisted in this work, presumably including translation.
 - 15 Bell comments that ‘Thus the holy sovereign made clear his declaration of Tibetan independence’; Bell, *Portrait*, p. 155, see also p. 145; OIOC, L/P&S/11/38–4515, Government of Tibet to Viceroy of India, 14 October 1912.
 - 16 Bell states that “The Dalai Lama was indeed an absolute dictator; more so as regards his own country than Herr Hitler and Signor Mussolini in theirs”; Bell *Portrait*, p. 197. Bell is, of course, discussing the extent of power, not the use of it. See also A. Lamb, *Tibet, China, and India 1914–1950* (Hertingfordbury, UK, Roxford Books, 1989), p. 50, n. 73.
 - 17 Lamb, *Tibet*, p. 75, n. 90.
 - 18 The clubbable atmosphere may, however, have been somewhat strained. McGovern was highly unpopular with British officialdom; for details see A. C. McKay, *Tibet and the British Raj: The Frontier Cadre 1904–1947* (London: Curzon, 1997), pp. 106–7. While in office, Jordan had strongly opposed many of Bell’s policies and described the Dalai Lama as, “an arch-intriguer and a most unscrupulous and dangerous person [who] should be warned to drop his ambitious schemes of conquest on [the] Chinese border”; OIOC, L/P&S/10/714–4074, Jordan to Balfour, 13 September 1918.
 - 19 While Gedun Choepal has attracted some attention as a modernizing intellectual figure, his activities and ideas had little, if any, practical effect; re. his life, see H. Stoddard, *Le Mendiant de l’Amdo* (Paris: Société d’Ethnologie, 1985).

- 20 Despite these innovations, however, Bell states that “The Dalai Lama had no wish to develop his country on Western lines; in fact, he had a horror of that”; Bell, *Portrait*, p. 190.
- 21 The works of Lamb, Goldstein and Bell provide a European source basis for an economic history of Tibet, to which may be added W. van Spengen, *Tibetan Border Worlds: A Geohistorical Analysis of Trade and Traders* (London: Kegan Paul International, 2000). Dhondup, *The Water-Bird*, p. iv states that Surkhang Sawang Chenmo’s ‘lost’ history of Tibet included considerable material on taxation. But any study of the issue needs to take into account the fact that the recorded Indo-Tibetan trade figures must be treated with extreme caution. They are little better than estimates of official trade; see McKay, *Tibet*, pp. 30–2.
- None the less, economic approaches have important implications: van Spengen, for example, states that “If Tibetan state formation failed, it was largely due to the fragmented nature of its internal economic relations. The basically self-sufficient nature of monasteries within their local settings, prevented the rise of a coherent *espace-mouvement* in economic terms . . . A compounding factor was the spatially disparate orientation of Tibet’s major regional clusters, which by virtue of their location *vis-à-vis* their respective *économies-mondes*, had always worked against Tibetan economic integration”; van Spengen, *Tibetan Border Worlds*, pp. 94–5.
- 22 See T. Grunfeld, *The Making of Modern Tibet*, revised edition (New York: M. E. Sharpe 1996), p. 74.
- 23 Although his accreditation as translator of *The Blue Annals* may be withdrawn in favour of Gedun Choepal; see B. Bogin and H. Decler, ‘Who was “this evil friend” (“the dog”, “the fool”, “the tyrant”) in Gedün Chöpel’s Sad Song?, *The Tibet Journal* XXII(3) (1997): 67–78.
- 24 See Bell, *Portrait*, pp. 436–41.
- 25 Other Tibetan historians have suffered similar difficulties with revisionist findings; see D. Templeman, ‘The Lotus and the Snowlion: Notes from Six Lectures on the Culture and History of Tibet given by David Templeman at the Australian Museum, Sydney’, printed by the Australian Tibet Society, 1994, p. 35.
- 26 British sources tend to contain a subtle homosexual ‘sub-text’ when they refer to Kunphela’s association with the Dalai Lama. Tibetan sexuality is an issue that – perhaps thankfully – has largely escaped the attention of Western academia.
- 27 In addition to the work of K. Dhondup, see also, for example, the critical comments of Professor Dawa Norbu, *Red Star over Tibet* (New Delhi: Collins 1987), pp. 72, 74, but also see p. 106 where he states that most Tibetans regard their fate as due to karma. In contrast, Shakabpa’s work makes no such judgements.
- 28 The Tibetans do not appear to have shared the Western image of themselves as a non-materialistic people. Dawa Norbu concludes that “we Tibetans are more materialistic than the average Westerner”[!]; *ibid.*, p. 96. Similar comments by Tibetans are recorded by Fosco Maraini (who visited Tibet in the 1940s with Professor Tucci); see F. Maraini, *Secret Tibet* (London: Hutchinson, 1952). A comparison of older and recent literature suggests the view of Tibetans as non-materialistic is a recent construct, and it is one that is not supported by the economic enterprise demonstrated by the Tibetan exile community.
- 29 See also, however, H. E. Richardson, *Tibet and its History* (London: Shambhala, 1984), pp. 150–4.
- 30 For a postmodernist examination of the literature of Western travellers and its role in the creation of Tibet as a sacred landscape, see P. Bishop, *The Myth of Shangri La: Tibet, Travel Writing and the Western Creation of Sacred Landscape* (London: Athlone, 1989). McKay, *Tibet*, p. 180, concludes that descriptions of the ‘colourful social life of the Tibetan aristocracy in the 1933–47 period can be read as a discourse on spiritual decline and aristocratic decadence.’
- 31 See, however, R. A. Rupen, ‘The Position of Tibet in International Law’, *China Quarterly* (July–September 1968), which argues that coercion does not necessarily nullify a treaty. I am indebted to Prof. A. Tom Grunfeld for this reference.
- 32 Bell, *Portrait*, p. 396.
- 33 See T. Shakya, *Dragon in the Land of Snows: A History of Modern Tibet since 1947* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1999); J. K. Knaus, *Orphans of the Cold War: America and*

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the Tibetan Struggle for Survival (New York: Public Affairs, 1999); S. Mahmud Ali, *Cold War in the High Himalayas: The USA, China and South Asia in the 1950s* (Richmond, UK: Curzon, 1999).

- 34 Such a reconciliation might develop on the model of the series of commercial *Tin Tin in Tibet* exhibitions held in Europe in the late 1990s, and the *Mythos Tibet* exhibition organized by Martin Brauen at the Ethnographic Museum in Zurich in 2000–1. Both have used popular and commercial images of ‘Mythos Tibet’ as a means of introducing and understanding a historical Tibet.
- 35 This statement was made publicly by a leading figure in the New Age understanding of Tibet -who none the less occupies an academic position at a leading American university (at an introductory speech before the ‘Mythos Tibet’ conference held in Bonn, Germany, in 1996).
- 36 In this regard the thesis of Christiaan Klieger is particularly significant. He has convincingly argued that a Tibetan Buddhist state requires a patron, and that the West now fills that role, at least to the Tibetan exile community; see, P. C. Klieger, *Tibetan Nationalism (The Role of Patronage in the Accomplishment of a National Identity)* (Berkeley: Folklore Institute, 1992).
- 37 See H. E. Richardson, *Ceremonies of the Lhasa Year*, ed. M. Aris (London: Serindia, 1993); also see T. Huber, *The Cult of Pure Crystal Mountain: Popular Pilgrimage and Visionary Landscape in Southeast Tibet* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1999).

THE 1901 PROCLAMATION OF H. H. DALAI LAMA XIII

Tenzing Chhodak

Source: *The Tibet Journal* III(1) (1978): pp. 30–8.

Instruction to all monks, and laymen of the lower, middle and upper classes who dwell in Tibet, "The Land of Thirteen Ten-Thousand (Householders)".

Code of religious preservation and discipline¹

The fundamental origin of all welfare and happiness in this universe is derived solely from the precious teachings of the Buddha. The proper upholding of that teaching depends on religious practitioners. Lamas (*bla-ma*) and ecclesiastical authorities must urge the entire community of monks, regardless of sect, especially those belonging to the three great monastic centres (Dra-pung, 'Bras-spungs: Se-ra, Se-ra; and Gan-den, *dGa'-ldan*) to live according to the discipline of moral conduct which is the root of the Dharma and to spend their time in the instruction, practice and cultivation of the three wisdoms: those of learning, reflection and meditation.

Code of official conduct

Government officers and local leaders² apart from tax collection and law enforcement, are forbidden to impose oppressive irregularities or inconveniences, or to inflict new taxation and new laws on the public for self-serving purposes.

A detailed "road bill" (*lam-yig*, *lam-yig*),³ will be issued from this place (Lhasa, the capital) even for one or two pack-horses, exempting those essential for government purposes. Without a road bill possessing the proper seal, travellers, officials or anyone else, may not use the compulsory transportation service or acquire a pack animal, riding horse, messenger, fodder and fuel, service for horse and hearth and other requisites. Such free services and unnecessary borrowing not only may not occur, but these should not even be discussed.⁴ Furthermore, do not give and take mere token payment for the actual service rendered by messengers and pack animals.

District officers must carefully inspect the road bill. An accounting system should be instituted and an accounting of the expenses incurred should be conducted every six months in the presence of both the officials and the public. A sealed report must be

sent on time. Clear and undisguised complaints must be submitted promptly should there be instances of mistreatment and imposed services, etc.

The district officials must take decisive preventive measures against those self-interested leaders who misinterpret official decrees and claim exemption from the code of law and their responsibilities through illegal activities by breaking the law and taking the life of persons under their jurisdiction. Individual leaders may not undertake any activity contrary to national interest and the general welfare.

Similarly, when travellers and pilgrims etc. are subjected to killing, beating and robbing by thieves and bandits, and when aged parents, who are the most excellent and virtuous dharma-field, are subjected to neglect and expulsion by sons and daughters, the district officials must report it immediately. In accordance with the previous code of law, the authorities are strictly forbidden to take the law into their own hands.

Code of public behaviour

Each region is responsible to prevent the melting of gold religious objects, the destruction of Buddha's images, scriptures and monuments attributed to His Enlightenment. In short, shrines treated as sacred objects⁵ should be protected.

Furthermore, (money) lenders may not exact high interests or compound interests beyond the scope of established regulations. Neither should they confiscate land and animals in the payment of debts. Henceforth, the use and establishment of unlawful and inappropriate units of measurement and scales, the plunder of the humble poor by arrogant officials and selfish nobles, oppression in the manner of the big insect eating the small insect, the sale of rotten foodstuffs, and the change of quality in business transactions are not permitted.

In accordance with this decree, should district officials pass judgement through minor fines and punishments, they are forbidden to make charges which arise from a desire to consume others. Without the actual order from the district magistrate, lower officials may not resort to violence nor the imprisonment of persons without substantial evidence.

Code for the prohibition of hunting

From the first Tibetan month of the year, the occasion for commemorating the miraculous feats of the Buddha (Mon-lam chen-po, *sMon-lam chen po*⁶), "until the thirtieth of the seventh month, all Tibetans must strictly observe the law of the prohibition of hunting. Tigers, leopards, brown bears, wild dogs and mice must not be killed. Generally, birds, untamed animals, fishes, seals and carnivorous wild animals are included in this law of prohibition. In short, all undomesticated living creatures are not to be killed. Though this particular policy and the official decree about prohibition will be issued from time to time, the district officials, especially in the hinterland, should not relax the supervision of the said prohibition policy due to negligence or personal greed. In the past leaders as well as the people at large, have not paid heed to the prohibition decree. From this time onwards, the prohibition decree must be studied, explained and distributed without delay. The lives of all living creatures, big or small, may not be harmed so as to promote the peace and happiness of all sentient beings."

Study and recitation of sutras and mantras

For the sake of happiness in the country, prosperity of livestock and the alleviation of strife and illness, etc., all Tibetans must carry out the following religious activities: (1) to read and study the *Ka-gyur* (*bKa'-gyur*) the great collection of the Buddhist writings;⁷ 100,000-verse *Prajnaparamita*; (various *Transcendent Wisdom Scriptures*); the *1,000 Buddhas of the Bhadra Kalpa*; the *Ten-Volume Suvarnaprabhasa*; the *Five Codes of Discipline*; the *Immaculate Confession Texts*; and the *Ratnakuta* (Jewel-Heap Scripture).⁸ The four supreme Tara mandalas and the old sacred temples must be restored, renovated and consecrated, and donations must be made to them; and (2) to recite aloud Bhaisajya Guru (the Buddha of Medicine); Om Mani Padme Hum, prayers to the three protectors, spells of the three protectors; the 100-syllable Vajrasattva mantra; the Vajraguru; spell of Parsvi (goddess against smallpox); the twenty-one names of Tara; the Usnisisitatapattra; the prayer for effortless aspiration; the pacification of the Mamo demonesses; and offering-ceremonies to the goddess Jvalamukhi (the goddess against cholera).⁹

Ritual duties and works of restoration

All main temples in each of the regions must be restored if they are in a state of deterioration. Precious sanctuaries require offerings of butter lamps, and the erection of great prayer flags. It is necessary to conduct frequent rituals, prayers and offerings; to whitewash the pagodas; to maintain the stone-carved Mani; to repair roads; to offer incense to the deities; to perform ceremonial services for the war-god; and to make offerings and invoke the five heavenly Buddhas, the three mundane deities and each local deity. In particular, prayers and offerings should be made to the twelve protector goddesses and the five long-life deities. Efforts must be made to perform these aforesaid activities uninterruptedly every month, according to the economy and size of the locality.

The observation of fasting practices on the 8th, the 15th and the 30th of the month, or else at least the minimal “one day vow” must be undertaken voluntarily each month. Given that the intent of this decree is for the peace and prosperity of all the regions, all district officials must dutifully take charge of it without delay or intrigue. Concomitantly, the public must endeavour to bear its proper responsibility honestly without transgressing this new regulation, accepting it to be for the welfare and happiness of each individual. During the drought of summer, no one – the haves, have-nots and whomever – is permitted to undertake construction and related work.

Justification of this proclamation

From the superior courts of justice and government, laws have been promulgated to protect the religious and secular systems in this Land of Snows, and to promote universal goodness. Specifically, the regulations of the hills and valleys (code of nature) have been continuously issued each year. But it is said that a few evil-minded persons take pleasure in perverse conduct. These people who are destroyers of the common welfare (are said to) ignore and undermine the policies of the Dalai Lama’s spiritual and secular government founded according to the teachings of the Lord Buddha. The

laws are used to protect local customs and culture, and to guide the internal relations and external conduct of the people in the central region as well as in the hinterland.

Henceforth, such perverse conduct, as a result of following the evil path, will be thoroughly investigated following reports from either the district officials or the victim himself. The violators will be punished physically or banished, and the government will confiscate land, material property and so forth in accordance with the law. Therefore each person must accordingly cherish and bear his own responsibility.

Upon receipt of this fundamental code of law, it must be distributed, studied and its meaning explained to all the districts and localities. All of you must accept it accordingly and implement it without mistakes.

Thus is published this decree, in the year of the Female Iron Bull (1901) the lunar month (Posamasa), in the period prior to the full moon. Written by the (Thirteenth) Dalai Lama in the Holy Potala, the immeasurable palace.

Author's notes

Recently, Mrs. Marie Lien Houlder presented the American Institute of Buddhist Studies with a number of Tibetan rare books and artifacts, the collection of her late husband, Mr. Frank Houlder, of Woodstock, New York. Throughout his life-time, Mr. Houlder pursued his fascination and interest for Tibet and Tibetans with great care and scholarly thoroughness. One object which he cherished with great reverence was a large scroll of Tibetan paper, a document promulgated by His Holiness the Thirteenth Dalai Lama (translated above), which Mr. Houlder had obtained during an auction of Colonel Francis Edward Younghusband's possessions. This document is believed to date from the time just prior to British incursion into Tibet in 1904 and is a statement of the principles and practices of Tibetan society, written principally for the outside world.

The document is unusual, with the paper measuring 140" in height by 40" in width and the text containing thirty-eight lines. The main script is written in black, although twenty-eight syllables or phrases are in red. The handwriting is beautiful and the style is that commonly used for addressing letters, called *drug-sha* (*'brug-sha*) ("drug" meaning Bhutan) as this style is more popular in Bhutan. The document is adorned with artistic drawings: a snow lion holding up a lotus seat on the bottom; a fierce Garuda with its eagle's legs, tail and wings, holding an identical lotus seat above the writing. Upon the seat, there is a large white spot, symbolising a moon-cushion. A little above this image one finds a golden roof similar to that of the Highest roof of the Potala palace. On both sides of the script there are flower designs spiraling around two large columns. The document is sealed with two large square seals in red ink. The originality of the art is beyond doubt, but the document raises a number of important questions in terms of both its form and content. Why is it written in such an elaborate artistic form? What were the historical conditions of the time which necessitated the issue of such a Proclamation? In order to raise some issues and generate further research into Tibetan history of the time, this translator has endeavoured to give some hypothetical answers to these two general questions.

According to the late Mr. Houlder, the Proclamation had been intended specifically for the West, presumably for the British invaders of 1904. It is possible that the impending opening of Tibet stimulated the Proclamation but the foreigners are not

directly addressed in the text. In any case, the translator does not believe that it was distributed throughout the country in such an elaborate form. Moreover, when the square seal of the Proclamation is compared with the Tibetan 100 “sang” (*srang*) banknote, it appears to be the government seal rather than that of the Dalai Lama. The Dalai Lama’s seal is circular. However, the red colouring of the square seal is problematic here since the government seals are always in black. Possibly, the regent applied the government seal in red, this being the Dalai Lama’s colour. There is a paragraph just above the title in the same handwriting, which reads as follows:

Herein lies the message proclaimed by¹⁰ the omniscient Vajradhara, the Dalai Lama, who (is acknowledged) by the edict of the Great Emperor (of China) as Lord of the virtues of the Buddha Doctrine on earth and enlightened ruler of the western land of supreme virtue.

This passage is clearly an addition to the text since the Dalai Lama would not refer to himself in such terms of praise. It is also interesting to note that this passage refers to the Dalai Lama’s rule as authorised by the Manchu Emperor.

The main text of the Proclamation was originally written on some different paper and distributed to the public in 1901 (Female Iron Ox). The authorship of the Dalai Lama is unquestioned. But when Colonel Younghusband arrived in Lhasa in 1904, it is probable that the government of Tibet in the absence of the Dalai Lama (the Dalai Lama was in exile at the time due to the British invasion), copied the Proclamation on specially prepared paper similar to the paper used for the final examination of Tibetan schools.¹¹ This specially prepared text might have been presented to the invaders to show that this well-intentioned code of law was in force.

Turning to the historical conditions of Tibet at the turn of the 20th century, the following argument will concentrate on some select factors which depart from the foreign dominated histories of contemporary Tibet. Central Asia (Tibet, Mongolia, Sinkiang and Afghanistan) was a pivotal point for the three major powers (Tsarist Russia, Imperial China and the Colonial British Raj) of the time. Though the fate of these regions was again and again decided and signed away on the tables of imperialist diplomacy, the politics of Central Asia was not really understood by these powers.

Due to Britain’s desire to increase her sphere of influence, a number of political emissaries was despatched to Tibet. These included George Bogle in 1774, Captain Turner in 1781, Chandra Das in 1881 and Ekai Kawaguchi in 1900. Such acts of imperialism culminated in the Younghusband invasion of Tibet in 1904, which was explained to the world on grounds that Tsarist Russia’s influence was growing in Tibet,¹² due to the activities of an influential Mongolian monk in Lhasa.

This monk “spy” or “Dorjiev” came to Lhasa in 1880 as an ordinary young monk from the Buryat. Due to his superior intelligence, within a short time he established his scholastic reputation among learned Tibetans. Having obtained his *ge-she* (*dge-bshes*) degree, he became one of the instructors of the young 13th Dalai Lama,¹³ as well as the confidant of the Dalai Lama for the next fifteen or twenty years.

Dorjiev’s reputation has been misrepresented by writers such as Charles Bell, Hugh Richardson, Ekai Kawaguchi and even by T. Shakabpa. To the Tibetans, Dorjiev was renowned for his religious activities and he may be regarded as a great Mongolian patriot, who rightly belonged to the tradition of Galdan Khan, Ligdan Khan and

Altan Khan. His main interest lay in establishing a Central Asian nation under the umbrella of Buddhism. In order to carry out his ambitious mission he needed the help and blessings of the Dalai Lama. His design and inspiration actually derived from Galdan Khan who was a contemporary of the 7th Dalai Lama. Though Galdan's Pan-Mongolian movement was precisely based on Mongol might and Buddhist tenets, he failed to obtain the full cooperation of the Dalai Lama of Tibet and was therefore crushed by the Manchus. Thus, Dorjiev's conception of Central Asian nationalism was extended to incorporate Tibet and the Dalai Lama. If successful, this would have created a fourth power on the continent of Asia and a refuge for the Mahayana Buddhism of Tibet. Dorjiev's activities were oriented towards the creation of a unified, independent, Buddhist nation wherein Mahayana teachings might gain the protection and support of a religiously inspired government and be free of Christian and Confucian interference. The Proclamation of Dalai Lama XIII should therefore be viewed in the larger context of this historical development.

The purpose of these comments is to propose an indigenous look at Tibetan socio-political history, especially in the modern period. A thorough investigation may establish a concrete historical relationship between Dorjiev and this Proclamation. Unfortunately, there is no available written Tibetan record about this remarkable figure.

It is well-known that dominant powers employ history as a means of justifying their own supremacy. Accordingly, Tibetan history of the time and subsequent history, represented the interests of Imperial China and the British Raj, through policies intended to maintain Tibet at an apolitical level of consciousness. The patronage of select noble families, monks and monastic institutions¹⁴ by both countries was instrumental in pursuance of these objectives. Tibet has never had a social history based on actual material conditions, and accounts given by Chandra Das, Kawaguchi, Bell and Tieh-tseung Li are partially responsible for any historical distortion. The Proclamation should therefore provide a strong basis for new research and a reassessment of history through an objective analysis of the past.

Acknowledgements

My thanks are due to my friend Robert A. F. Thurman, Professor at Amherst College, Amherst, Massachusetts, for editing portions of the manuscript.

Notes

- 1 All the sub-headings have been added to the text to indicate a general classification.
- 2 Hereinafter, officer is designated for the central authorities and leaders for the local authorities.
- 3 Lam-yig is translated as road-bill or passport. This document issued by the government was freely used to exploit the common people residing along the main highways (cf. to *Tibetan Dictionary* by Das, p. 1115).
- 4 A Japanese monk scholar found this law was enforced in 1923. Tada Tokan recorded, "When I was about to go home, it became necessary to hire a good many horses in order to transport a vast amount of literature and other luggage. It used to be accommodated by *tau* (pack-horse) service, a courtesy to a national guest. Therefore, I anticipated that the transportation would be free of charge, being treated as an official duty. However, in the passport issued by the Dalai there was no mention that the transportation would be accommodated by *tau* . . . The Dalai Lama took pains to tell me the hardship of the common people." Tada Tokan, *The 13th Dalai Lama* (The Center for East Asian Studies, 1965), p. 94.

- 5 "Tsha Tsha" or religious images moulded from clay and placed in the special shrines on road sides.
- 6 Mon-lam festivity lasts three weeks, from the 4th to the 25th of the first lunar month. Monks from the three great monasteries as well as from other monasteries participate in this celebration. During this period, the Lhasa population increases by 100% or more.
- 7 The *Ka-gyur* is the largest collection of instruction and precepts of Sakyamuni Buddha, translated from Sanskrit, Chinese, and Central Asian languages into Tibetan. It contains 108 volumes (cf. Das, *Tibetan Dictionary*).
- 8 These works are large volumes or sets of volumes of Sutras included in the *Ka-gyur*. The precise titles are not given in the Tibetan text, common abbreviations being used.
- 9 These are either syllables, mantras or prayers of the Tantrayana, commonly practised in all walks of Tibetan life. The "three protectors" are Avalokitesvara, Manjusri and Vajrapani. The "Vajraguru" is the mantra of Padmasambhava. The "Mamo" are fierce local female spirits who were believed to cause great unrest if displeased.
- 10 The text reads bla-mar, a locative, when the context clearly calls for bla-mas, instrumental agentive.
- 11 The large "white spot" on the lotus seat held up by the Garuda would have been the place where the teacher wrote the grade number. The translator studied at a Lhasa school and has had experience in preparing this type of special paper for final yearly examinations.
- 12 Kawaguchi's mission is not as clear as the others, but the end result was no different. He reported to the British Raj the existence of a large community of armed Russians at Lhasa; none of this proved to be true. Cf. E. Kawaguchi's *Three Years in Tibet*.
- 13 T. W. D. Shakabpa, *Tibet: A Short Political History* (New Haven, Yale University Press), p. 232.
- 14 Owen Lattimore, *Inner Asian Frontiers of China* (Boston, Beacon Press, 1962), p. 229.

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TOURNAMENT OF SHADOWS

Russia's great game in Tibet

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In 1808, William Moorcroft, an English veterinary surgeon, left his prospering Oxford Street practice in London for Calcutta. The British East India Company, at that time the sub-continent's ruler, was encountering difficulties maintaining a supply of horses sufficiently hardy to carry cavalryman and kit in the colony's tropical climate, and it turned to the eminent veterinarian for his help. The situation was particularly urgent, since news had recently reached the Company of a plan by Napoleon and his ally, Tsar Alexander I of Russia, to mount an overland invasion of British India.

During his first few years as superintendent of the company's stud, Moorcroft came to the conclusion that somewhere to the north, in the uncharted wilderness beyond the Himalayas, horses of great stamina and speed roamed the plains. If a few specimens of this legendary breed could be found and brought back to Calcutta, he might succeed in reinvigorating the cavalry's bloodstock. Accordingly, in early 1812, Moorcroft set off for the Kailash region of south-western Tibet. By July of that year, the intrepid veterinarian had crossed a path into Tibet and stopped at a border hamlet to obtain permission to proceed to the town of Gartok, some 50 miles to the north.

In the house of a local official, where Moorcroft had been invited to present his request, the Englishman was enthusiastically greeted by two small dogs that were clearly Western in origin. Overjoyed at seeing a fellow European, the pug and the terrier, Moorcroft later recounted, "suddenly rushed towards me, fondled, caressed me, frisked, jumped, barked, and appeared as much rejoiced at seeing me as if they had recognized in me an old and favoured acquaintance."¹ The dogs next proceeded to perform a trick taught by their previous owners, and "sitting on their haunches and pushing forward their forelegs," imitated the military drill for presenting arms. The animals had clearly been the pets of soldiers. Much to his alarm, Moorcroft was informed by his host that the dogs had been brought by "Ooroos".²

To Moorcroft, the news that Russian troops had had dealings with a minor official in southern Tibet, less than 400 miles from Calcutta, came as a shock. Unaware that Napoleon had now turned on his former ally, Alexander I, the Company's representative concluded that Cossack scouts were reconnoitring Central Asia to plan an invasion route into India for the *Grande Armée*.

Moorcroft's warnings about the threat to India fell on deaf ears. The Company was preoccupied with consolidating its position over the immense real estate it already owned, and refused to worry about bazaar rumours. For the time being, in the warm afterglow of the victory at Waterloo, England and Russia were on excellent terms, and the veterinarian's urgent dispatches about Tsarist intrigues in the Himalayas were dismissed by his superiors.

Moorcroft was the first Englishman to worry publicly about plots in St Petersburg to subvert Tibet as a prelude to the invasion of England's most valuable colony. As the 20th century dawned, however, many of his compatriots began to share these concerns. Not long after the veterinarian's expedition, Tibet's borders were virtually sealed off from the European world, and, in the absence of any reliable information, it was altogether too easy for Britons to fear the worst about the terra incognita beyond the Himalayas. This lacuna became a matter of more than academic concern within a decade of Moorcroft's death in 1825, as England found itself engaged in the contest with Russia for dominion over Central Asia, which to its Victorian spectators came to be known as the Great Game.

Until the turn of the century, the playing fields of this imperial match lay outside of Tibet. London and St Petersburg directed their attention to such areas of contention as Persia, Afghanistan and the Khanates of Central Asia. In 1900, however, Tibet suddenly found itself in the spotlight of Anglo-Russian rivalry. Rumours of Tsarist subversion of the Potala and secret arms shipments led to a British military expedition in 1903 under the command of Colonel Francis Younghusband, which shot its way to Lhasa to preempt the establishment of another Russian puppet in Central Asia. Shortly thereafter, the two powers agreed to cease their squabbling in the face of the more immediate danger of Prussian bellicosity, and the Great Game was formally concluded with the Anglo-Russian Treaty of 1907.

Much has been written about England's involvement in this endgame of the Victorian cold war. Nearly a dozen works, have appeared in Great Britain by either the participants of the Younghusband expedition or its historians, and English literature about the Great Game is extensive. Yet there has been little research into Russia's involvement in Tibetan affairs during the years leading up to 1903. Consequently, there is still considerable controversy over the true nature of St Petersburg's activities, if any, in the Potala. Was "Russia's success in Tibet entirely due to proceedings of the Oriental Kind, secret missions, secret corruption, secret armaments, shameless denials and shameless bluff?" as one French writer argued.³ Or did it take the more benign form suggested by an American historian: "While Russia did have interests in Tibet, it was unlikely to exert much effort to pursue them; Tibet simply was not important enough"⁴

In many ways, Tibet was an ideal candidate for British anxieties about the security of India's northern frontier. With the addition of Nepal, Sikkim and Bhutan to its empire by the end of the 19th century, British rule in India extended to the foothills of the Himalayas. What lay beyond this sheer wall of rock remained largely a mystery to India's overlords. In the late 1700s, Lhasa had declared all Europeans *persona non grata* and thereafter did its best to keep them off its soil.

Geography considerably simplified this task. The most effective sentinel was the forbidding ring of mountains that virtually surrounds Tibet. The land itself constitutes an enormous plateau, whose extreme altitudes average 12,000 feet above sea level. While

the native inhabitants are hardened to its austere conditions, Tibet's rarified atmosphere and frequent storms provided further impediments against European interlopers.

During the 19th century only three Westerners are known to have reached Lhasa: the Englishman Thomas Manning in 1811 and two French missionary friars 35 years later. During most of the Great Game, England and Russia both returned the compliment, and largely ignored India's northern neighbour in favour of Persia, Afghanistan and the Central Asian khanates.

In London, the principal axis of any Russian advance into India was generally assumed to be Afghanistan.⁵ Tibet's geography was simply too forbidding. The many Russophobic tracts that came off British presses during the late 19th century made virtually no mention of Tibet.⁶ Even the hawkish George Curzon only referred to the nation *en passant* in his 400-page *Russia and Central Asia* in 1889.

As late as 1896, a British Military Intelligence report largely dismissed concerns about Cossacks breaching the Himalayas. "From a purely military point of view, their position would be faulty. A large force would starve and a small one could be easily crushed or driven out by a superior force from India," it stated, cautiously concluding that the possibility of Russian military involvement was "remote but not one to lose sight of."⁷

Yet while St Petersburg's strategists paid little attention to Tibet, Russia did enjoy closer ties with Tibet than other European nations by virtue of the various Buddhist nationalities living within its borders. These included the Kalmyks on the lower Volga and the Buriats and Chuvinians in Siberia. Most prominent were the Buriats in the Transbaikal region. Incorporated in the Russian empire in the early 17th century, this nomadic people had subsequently converted to Lamaism and considered themselves to be spiritually tied to the Dalai Lama's Yellow Hat sect.

Largely for reasons of administrative expediency, Russia's rulers had long maintained a policy of religious *laissez-faire* among its Muslim and Buddhist subjects in Asia, and at times even supported their clergy in an effort to coopt these peoples' leaders.⁸ Empress Elizabeth even recognized Buriatia's spiritual head, the Bandido Lama, as "Supreme Buddhist Patriarch of All Russia" in 1741, and her successors periodically provided subsidies to his lamaseries.⁹ Russia's policy of religious toleration was successful with regard to the Buriats, and they tended to regard Russia in a favourable light.

Since they were not considered to be European, Buriats and Kalmyks were exempt from the Dalai Lama's exclusionary policy, and pilgrims regularly made their way from Russia to Lhasa and the other sacred sites of their faith. Lamas also travelled southwards to receive advanced theological schooling at Tibet's monastic colleges. At the same time, the Tsar's Lamaist subjects also maintained trading links between Russia and Tibet and such 18th century English visitors as Captain Samuel Turner and George Bogle wrote of Siberian caravans bearing furs, hides, silver and chess sets to Lhasa and Shigatse.¹⁰

Elizabeth's niece Catherine the Great was the first Russian sovereign to take serious notice of Tibet. On several occasions, she sought to establish trading links with Lhasa, and she corresponded regularly with its leading clergy. Captain Turner noted that the Tibetan regent and other government officials "were no strangers to the reputation of the reigning Czarina." While they were not hostile to the Russian Empress, they were not prepared to waive their traditional prohibition on intercourse with foreigners, and Turner wrote that they maintained their "disinclination to enter into any foreign connections."¹¹

Catherine's heirs did not continue her efforts to establish a diplomatic rapport with Lhasa, and until the reign of Nicholas II Tibet was largely peripheral to Russian foreign affairs. During the 19th century, St Petersburg's strategists were much too preoccupied with the territorial morsels that could be snatched directly across the imperial frontier in Asia to pay much heed to more distant lands like Tibet. Foreign policy during the years from 1812 to 1895 in particular was marked by a high degree of "continuity and methodical cautiousness."¹² Only three men – Count Nesselrode, Prince Gorchakov and Giers – served as Minister of Foreign Affairs, and they maintained Russian diplomacy on a relatively pragmatic course. As the British military attache reported in 1896: "On the principle . . . of not being in too great a hurry, Russian statesmen prefer to let sleeping dogs lie, to do one thing at a time when possible, and that under favourable conditions."¹³

With the sole exception of the Crimean debacle, these men sought to avoid dangerous military entanglements. While Russia's Asian territories were expanding at a prodigious rate throughout this time, very few of these conquests involved direct confrontation with the other major powers. Furthermore, unlike the leading colonial empires of Western Europe, all of the Tsar's territorial acquisitions were contiguous to the imperial landmass. Under such conditions there was no room for adventures in an unknown nation far beyond Russia's borders like Tibet.

For the hundred years after Catherine the Great's death in 1796, Russian interest in Tibet was largely the domain of academics, geographers and Foreign Ministry intelligence archivists. The latter were functionaries of the Asiatic Department, which was established by Alexander I's Foreign Minister Count Nesselrode in 1819. Charged with gathering data about various nations outside of Europe,¹⁴ it employed a number of sources to gather information about the Orient.

One of the Department's most valuable intermediaries in this regard was the Russian Orthodox Church's mission in Peking.¹⁵ Established in accordance with the Treaty of Khiakhta, this remarkable institution began its operations in 1729, and for over a century functioned as Russia's sole permanent establishment in the Chinese capital. Among its residents were orientalist and linguists, and in addition to reporting on China itself, some of the mission's scholars studied some other nations on the Manchu Empire's periphery, including Tibet.

Russia's first Tibetologist of note was the mission's head from 1804 to 1821, Archimandrite Iakinf Bichurin. Although the monk's primary interest was China, he also studied Tibet and kept in contact with a large number of lamas resident in Peking. In subsequent years, after his return to Russia, Bichurin worked for the Asiatic Department and published several works about Tibet.

During the late 19th and early 20th centuries, St Petersburg University was a leading centre for Tibetology, and its faculty included such distinguished scholars as Sergei Oldenburg and Fedor Scherbatskoi. Their work was facilitated by the Tibetan Repository of the Academy of Sciences in St Petersburg. This institution had its origins in the reign of Peter the Great, and by the 1850s possessed the most extensive collection of Oriental texts in Europe.¹⁶

Another institution in the Russian capital interested in Tibet was the Imperial Geographical Society. Founded in 1845, the Society's chief *raison d'être* was mapping the Central Asian hinterland. The reign of Alexander II, from 1856 through 1881, is

considered by many to have been the golden age of Russian exploration, and no less than 300 journeys were made, of which 11 set foot in Tibet and Chinese Turkestan.¹⁷

Although the Society was a private foundation under the patronage of a grand Duke, its activities were motivated by more than pure scientific interest. It enjoyed close ties with the government's military and foreign policy establishments, and its expeditions were often organised by officers seconded from the army. Because of its semi-official status and its enthusiasm for Russia's imperialism, it was not inaccurate for foreigners to conclude that the Imperial Geographical Society's "talented members played the Great Game of Central Asia."¹⁸

The first Russian to be known to have explored Tibet was the hapless non-commissioned officer Phillip Efreimov. Garrisoned on the Orenburg Steppes in 1774, Efreimov was kidnapped and sold into slavery in Bukhara. After making good his escape from the khanate, he travelled extensively in Central Asia, including Western Tibet. The NCO managed to return to his homeland via India and published an account of his travels in St Petersburg in 1786, which included the first Russian geography of Tibet.

The Russian public was first truly acquainted with Tibet a century later by the expeditions of another soldier, Nikolai Przhewalsky. Born in 1839 into a family of minor landed gentry, Przhewalsky had attended the Academy of the General Staff in St Petersburg. His dissertation there on the geography of the recently-acquired Ussuri region caught the eye of the Geographical Society. Under the protection of the explorer Peter Semenov "Tian-Shansky", the subaltern began his career in 1867 with a topographical expedition of the same Ussuri territory.

Having proved his abilities as an explorer in Siberia, Przhewalsky was subsequently entrusted with much more ambitious surveys of Central Asia. From 1871 to 1885, he led three major journeys through Mongolia, Chinese Turkestan and Northern Tibet. Traversing an area larger than the continent of Europe, much of it hitherto uncharted, Przhewalsky made discoveries that were of inestimable value to science. A grateful Tsar Alexander III eventually promoted him to Major-General, Europe's leading geographical societies showered him with gold medals, and St Petersburg society lionized the explorer.

Yet in his own estimation, Przhewalsky was a failure, and he died a disappointed man. Although Tibet formed only a part of his travels, the mysterious nation was clearly the officer's passion. His English biographer rightly titled his book *The Dream of Lhasa*,¹⁹ and to Przhewalsky reaching the Potala became his life's ambition. At one point the explorer even received an official invitation from a Tibetan diplomat to visit the Buddhist pontiff, but was prevented from making the journey when his supplies began to run out. During another expedition, his caravan reached to within 150 miles of the capital, when a detachment of Tibetan soldiers barred his way. Finally, in 1888, Przhewalsky set out once more "to have a look at the Dalai Lama," but contracted typhus and died before even crossing the Russian border.²⁰ The Imperial Geographic Society mounted a number of further explorations of Tibet during the 1890s. However, the only one of these to succeed in reaching Lhasa was the Buriat Gonbojab, who travelled there as a Buddhist pilgrim.

Perhaps because of their heroic failure, Przhewalsky's exploits fascinated Russia. No less an author than Chekhov wrote his obituary, and both he and Nabokov based characters in their short stories on him.²¹ The explorer's extensive writings about Tibet

were particularly appealing to his audience, and helped to kindle a strong interest among Russians in the mysterious Buddhist theocracy.

Przhewalsky's significance to Russo-Tibetan relations also lies in the three ideas he promoted about Tibet. The first of these, as set out in a letter written during his sojourn in Peking in 1871, suggested using the Buddhists of Buriatia to appeal to their co-religionists in Tibet to rebel against China, and to join them under the Tsar's benevolent rule.²² Six years later Przhewalsky wrote a memorandum to his joint sponsors in the Geographical Society and the War Ministry in which he described the Dalai Lama as a powerful Oriental pope, with dominion over some 250 million Asiatic souls. The implication was that whoever ruled Lhasa would enjoy tremendous power over the continent. Securing the Tibetan capital, he urged, must therefore become the primary objective of Russian foreign policy.²³ The third, and most well-known of his ideas, was the myth of the "White Tsar" (Belyi Tsar). In an article he wrote in 1887, Przhewalsky explained that:

The nomad Mongols . . . the Mussulman Chinese, and the inhabitants of Eastern Turkestan . . . are all more or less possessed with the idea of becoming subjects of the White Tsar, whose name, equally with that of the Dalai Lama, appears in the eyes of the Asiatic masses as surrounded with a halo of mystic light.²⁴

One of the geographer's most august fans was the young Tsarevich, the future Tsar Nicholas II. Upon his return from Tibet in 1881, Przhewalsky was summoned to Gatchina by Tsaritsa Maria Pedorovna to tutor her 13-year-old son about Central Asia. The lad's curiosity was sparked by the great explorer's exotic tales of lamas and Buddhism and, over the years, the youth kept in touch. Before setting off on his next expedition in 1883, Przhewalsky was presented with a costly aluminium telescope by his imperial admirer, and five years later the Tsarevitch subsidised the publication of that expedition's account. Przhewalsky's friendship with the heir to the Russian throne left its mark, and, as one scholar speculated, "they forged a link in a long chain of events and influences that involved Nicholas deeply in Asia and interested him in ruling the non-Chinese people of Asia."²⁵

Nicholas's ascension to the throne in 1894 was accompanied by a diplomatic and intellectual turn to the East. The new strategic emphasis on the Orient was largely the result of the Qing dynasty's growing infirmity. China's disastrous war with Japan in 1895 altered some basic assumptions throughout Europe about the Manchus' abilities to maintain their empire's cohesion. Effectively checked by the other powers in Ottoman Turkey, St Petersburg now looked more closely at the Far East for territorial opportunities. As a Russian newspaper editorial urged its readers:

At present there is a splendid opportunity to finish China at one stroke and without trouble, dividing it between the chiefly interested European powers. To let pass such a moment would be unpardonable: *China delenda est!*²⁶

Russia was by no means the only European empire to participate in the "peaceful plunder" of China. Germany, France and England all began to encroach on the periphery of the Manchu domains during the years immediately following 1895 as

well. However, Russia had the largest appetite for Qing real estate. The start of work on the Trans-Siberian Railway earlier in the decade heightened official interest in the Tsar's East Asian possessions and in the lands immediately adjacent to them, particularly Manchuria and Korea.

The final decade of the 19th century also saw an increasing intellectual infatuation with the Orient. A small but influential group of Russian writers and statesmen, that came to be known as the *Vostochniki* or "Orientalists", began to stress Russia's Asiatic heritage. Such Silver Age authors as Vladimir Solovev, Andrei Bely and Alexander Blok wrote of the Mongol blood in Russian veins. Thus Solovev rhapsodized about "Panmongolism" and "*Ex Oriente Lux*,"²⁷ while Blok proudly announced: "We are Scythians and Asians too, from coasts to coasts that breed squint eyes, bespeaking greed!"²⁸

Politically, the *Vostochniki* called for more active expansion in the Far East on cultural and historical grounds. Just as the Pan-Slavists of an earlier generation called for union with their ethnic cousins in the Balkans, so too did this new ideology yearn for a fusion of Slav and Oriental, under the benevolent rule of the White Tsar. Its publicists appealed to Russia's sense of its "historical mission" to merge with Asia. Like America's westward expansion earlier in the 19th century, Russia too had its Manifest Destiny. The Moscow University historian Mikhail Pogodin proclaimed:

To us belongs, in addition, half of Asia, China, Japan, Tibet, Bokhara, Khiva, Kokand, Persia, if we want to, and perhaps must, expand our possessions to spread the European element in Asia, so that [the Russian] may rise above his brother.²⁹

Among the more prominent advocates of Russia's mission in Asia were the St Petersburg society physician Peter Badmaev and the newspaper publisher Prince Esper Esperovich Ukhtomsky. A Buriat convert to the Orthodox Church, Badmaev enjoyed impeccable connections to the court.³⁰ This "wise and cunning Asiatic," as the poet Alexander Blok referred to him,³¹ operated a clinic specialising in Tibetan herbal medicine. Badmaev's clinic was patronised by the capital's Brahmins, and counted among its illustrious clientele Finance Minister Count Witte and, later, the Duma's President Rodzyanko.

Peter Badmaev used his access to the Tsar and his senior officials to prescribe some eccentric measures for Russian Far Eastern policy. In 1893, he approached Alexander III with an unusual plan. His scheme, as outlined in a memorandum entitled "On the Task of Russian Policy in the Far East," proposed profiting from the Qing Dynasty's growing infirmity. Recalling Przhewalsky's ideas about Tibet, Badmaev suggested dispersing legions of Buriat fifth columnists among their Lamaist co-religionists in Tibet, Mongolia and Western China. Having seized power, they would instruct the "nobility and leading Buddhist priests to set off to St Petersburg to supplicate the White Tsar to accept their submission."³²

Although Witte strongly endorsed it, the Emperor sensibly turned down the baroque project. Nevertheless, Badmaev managed to remain in the latter's good graces, and took care to befriend the Tsarevich Nicholas Alexandrovich.

Another intimate of the heir to the throne was Prince Ukhtomsky. The scion of a venerable lineage, Ukhtomsky moved in exalted circles. Witte tapped the prince to

head his Russo-Chinese Bank in 1896, and later sent him to Peking on a sensitive diplomatic mission. Six years earlier, Ukhtomsky had accompanied the Tsarevich Nicholas Alexandrovich on an exalted tour of the Far East as his tutor in Oriental culture and history.

At the behest of the future Tsar, the prince produced a richly-appointed account of the journey, which was subsequently translated and published abroad in English, French and German editions, as if to announce to all of Europe Russia's historic turn to the East. In his work, as well as on the pages of his newspaper, *St Petersburgskie Vedemosti*, Ukhtomosky energetically advocated a more active involvement in the Orient: "Asia – we have always belonged to it. We have lived its life and felt its interests . . . This great and mysterious Orient is ready to become ours," the prince told his readers.³³

Ukhtomsky was particularly interested in Tibet. In addition to possessing a renowned collection of Tibetan art, he published extensively about the nation. Like Przhewalsky and Badmaev, Ukhtomsky saw in the Buriats an excellent link to the Dalai Lama and a means to benefit from his enormous influence over the Buddhist world. He too frequently invoked the myth of the White Tsar:

Every year thousands [of Russian Lamaists] go on pilgrimages to Mongolia and the Tibetan centres of learning . . . Everywhere this intelligent element . . . quietly bears into this Asiatic wilderness ideas of the White Tsar and of . . . [his] giant empire, which has attracted its subjects of non-Slovanic blood not by cruelty but by kindness.³⁴

Three years later on the eve of the Younghusband expedition, the prince published *From the Lands of Lamaism*, which sought to rally Russia to Tibet's defence. "We are late!" he warned, "the English are readying themselves for an assault on the kingdom of the Dalai Lama."³⁵

One French diplomat regarded Prince Ukhtomsky as "the interpreter and the principal artisan of the Russian programme and policy in the Far East."³⁶ While this assessment is too generous, the pamphleteer was certainly one of the best-known actors in Russia's Asian policy at the turn of the century. His friendship with the Tsar gave him ready access to the diplomatic establishment, but aside from his publications, Ukhtomsky's influence was not a decisive factor in foreign affairs.³⁷

Ukhtomsky, Badmaev and Przhewalsky all enjoyed close ties to Tsar Nicholas II. Their appeals for a more aggressive policy in Asia and, in particular, in Tibet, found a sympathetic hearing at the court. This interest stemmed in part from Nicholas' upbringing. As Tsarevitch, he had been the first Romanov sovereign to travel to Asia. At the same time, Witte's astute move to have the Russian *dauphin* appointed to the Committee Overseeing the Construction of the Trans-Siberian Railway further involved him in Far Eastern affairs.³⁸ Consequently, the young Tsar readily agreed with many of the *Vostochniki's* views. "For the young and impressionable crown prince," one scholar wrote, "the idea of Russia's mission and glory in the Far East was strong liquor."³⁹

During the first decade of his reign, Nicholas II continued to devote much of his attention to the Far East. Encouraged by such men as his Hohenzollern cousin Kaiser Wilhelm II and the Finance Minister, Russia's Emperor fantasised about future Oriental conquests. At one point, War Minister Kuropatkin noted in his diary: "I

told Witte that our sovereign has grandiose plans in his head: to take Manchuria for Russia, to move toward the annexation of Korea to Russia. He dreams of taking under his orb Tibet too."⁴⁰

The Tsar's "grandiose plans" did not translate into a determined or consistent strategy in Asia. On the contrary, from 1895 Tsarist foreign policy began to describe a highly erratic course. The death of Foreign Minister Giers in that year marked the end of the cautious diplomacy that had served Russia so well in Asia for much of the 19th century. One symptom of the deterioration in foreign policy was the rapidity by which new ministerial appointments were made. Whereas since the reign of Alexander I in 1812 Russia had only three foreign ministers, under Nicholas II no less than seven men were to hold the post. In such a state of discontinuity and misdirection, it was altogether too easy for foreign powers like England thoroughly to misinterpret Russian intentions.

Yet when Russian diplomacy took an alarmingly aggressive turn in Manchuria and Korea, it continued to ignore Tibet. In 1900, for example, Witte turned down a request for 5,000 roubles to employ Gonbojab Tsybikov as a professor of Tibetan, arguing that,

The study of Tibetan . . . can hardly be considered of sufficient practical value to warrant the establishment of a special chair at the Oriental Institute . . . Concerning [the chair's] value for the opening of Tibet to the world . . . it must be noted that . . . aside from the fact that this would hardly be in our interest, at present . . . we have no indication that we can count on the possibility of realizing such assumptions in the future.⁴¹

A diplomatic initiative made to China that year to include Mongolia, Manchuria and much of Eastern Turkestan failed to even mention Tibet.⁴²

As they had during the 19th century, the Tsar's strategists still refused to look much further than those lands on the border. Manchuria and Korea were directly contiguous to the empire, Tibet was not. Tsar Nicholas' musings notwithstanding, Lhasa did not figure significantly in Russia's Asiatic considerations at the turn of the century.

Nowhere were British misconceptions about Russian foreign policy during Nicholas II's reign more glaring than in the episode involving Lama Dorzhiev. Until 1900, Tibet had remained completely peripheral to the Great Game. Aside from the Imperial Geographical Society's expeditions and Alexander III's largesse to his grandson, Peter Badmaev, the Russian government's policy regarding Tibet was non-existent.

Meanwhile Great Britain, whose empire in India now touched its southern border, did not pay particularly more attention to Tibet in the years leading up to 1900. The colonial government in Calcutta had made a few desultory attempts to open Lhasa to exports of British wool and Indian tea, and there had been some diplomatic irritation when Tibet had not respected the border with Sikkim. In the main, England, like Russia, was content to let the Dalai Lama and his subjects live in their self-imposed "splendid isolation."

A few clippings from the British press in the Summer of 1901 dispelled Britain's long-standing nonchalance. The items in question contained some laconic accounts in an Odessa paper and two St Petersburg dailies, *Novoe Vremia* and *Le Mésager*

Officiel. The first was a small feature in the 12 June issue of *Odesskie Novosti* about an “Extraordinary Mission from the Lama of Tibet” which had landed at the Crimean port en route to the Russian capital with unspecified “instructions of diplomatic importance.” The group carried letters from the 13th Dalai Lama, and its aim was said to be “the rapprochement and strengthening of good relations with Russia.”⁴³ The St Petersburg papers confirmed the story, adding that the Tsar and the Dowager Empress Marie Fedorovna had granted audiences to the dignitaries.⁴⁴

The leader of the group was a remarkable Buriat monk, Agvan Dorzhiev. Born in 1854 in Transbaikalia, Dorzhiev had initially received theological schooling at Urga in Mongolia. At the age of 26, he enrolled in a college at the great monastic centre of Drepung in Tibet, whence he graduated with flying colours as a *Geshe*, the Lamaist equivalent of professor of metaphysics. The Buriat evidently impressed his superiors, for he was given the singular honour of instructing the young 13th Dalai Lama in the Buddhist catechism. Upon attaining his majority in 1895, the Dalai Lama appointed his former tutor to be his “Work-Washing Abbot”, a position which involved daily ritualistic cleansing of the Tibetan leader and his chambers, and implied a considerable degree of familiarity.

Dorzhiev was enormously influential at the Potala, and the Dalai Lama sought his counsel on both spiritual and temporal matters. The most pressing among the latter was Tibet’s fragile independence. The principal threats to Lhasa’s sovereignty came from China in the east and the British in the south. The Manchu emperors had militarily intervened in Tibet on several occasions during the 18th century and still claimed the nation as its vassal. A hundred years later, however, as the Qing inexorably declined into dynastic decay, their capacity to meddle in Lhasa’s affairs was practically non-existent. Now the English and their sepoys posed the greatest danger. The systematic annexation of Nepal, Darjeeling, Bhutan and the other Himalayan principalities over the course of the 19th century had brought the British army right to its border. Given the logic of imperial expansion, it was not hard for the Dalai Lama to conclude that his domain would be next.

Tibetan attitudes to Russia were more positive. Most of its knowledge about the nation came from members of Russia’s Buddhist minorities, such as the Buriats and Kalmyks, who made their way to Lhasa on pilgrimages or to receive spiritual instruction. Incorporated into the Russian empire in the 18th century, they enjoyed a significant degree of religious *laissez-faire*. Empress Elizabeth even recognized Buriatia’s spiritual head, the Bandido Lama, as “Supreme-Buddhist Patriarch of All Russia” in 1741, and her successors periodically provided subsidies to his lamaseries.⁴⁵

Russia’s policy of religious toleration was successful with regard to their Buddhist subjects, and they tended to regard Russia in a favourable light. Buriat and Kalmyk pilgrims often told their Tibetan hosts about the benign nature of Tsarist rule. Moreover, unlike the Manchus or British India, the distant power to the north was in no position to bring armed pressure to bear on the Potala. “It needs no conspiracy theory to explain why Dorzhiev encouraged the Tibetan government to offset the threat from Britain by contacts with Russia,” one scholar rightly concluded.⁴⁶

The Buriat further enhanced his fatherland’s stature by telling his former pupil that Russia was the fabled *Shambala* (or “Shangri-La”), about which a lama of the Yellow Hat Sect had prophesied. According to this legend, a mighty Buddhist prince would appear “somewhere to the north of Kashmir” and bring the world under his sway.⁴⁷

Nicholas II, Dorzhiev added, was the incarnation of this prince, who for the sake of expediency pretended to be a Christian.⁴⁸

The Buriat lama's first voyage to St Petersburg had been in 1898, ostensibly to raise funds from Buddhist Kalmyks and Buriats for his monastery in Tibet. During the visit, he met with a number of government officials, including his Buriat compatriot Peter Badmaev. A second trip was made two years later, which was now briefly reported in the press. This time, Dorzhiev travelled in his capacity as the head of an official Tibetan embassy, and was received by the Tsar at Livadia. The scant journalistic coverage given to the journey in 1900 would seem to confirm the historian Lobdanov-Rostovsky's assessment that "there is no proof that the Russian government was alive to the importance of this move."⁴⁹

George Curzon, Russophobe extraordinaire and viceroy of India since 1899, at first discounted the importance of Dorzhiev's trip to Russia. "Tibet is, I think, much more likely in reality to look to us for protection than to Russia," he concluded upon learning of the mission in 1900.⁵⁰ When the Viceroy received news of another embassy not more than a year later, his reaction was rather different.

Quite possibly, Curzon's patience had been tried by the inability of his own efforts to establish some form of diplomatic ties with Lhasa. Unable even to have a letter delivered to the Potala, he was horrified to learn that the same Tibetans who had repeatedly made protestations of their reluctance to any contact with foreigners were now approaching St Petersburg on their own initiative. The presence of a Russian citizen at the mission's head was clearly not coincidental, and the viceroy strongly suspected Russian collusion. In a letter to Lord Hamilton at the Home Government, he wrote:

It cannot be said that the Tibetan mission to Russia only represents the monasteries in the north of Tibet. On the contrary, the head of the mission, though originally a Russian Mongolian subject, has been resident in Lhasa for many years and is no doubt familiar with the priestly junta who rule in that place . . . I have not the slightest doubt [that] the result must in any case be unfavourable to ourselves.⁵¹

Rumours the following year of a secret Russo-Chinese treaty acknowledging St Petersburg's dominion over Tibet did little to allay Curzon's fears, and the situation was ominously reminiscent of Afghanistan in 1878. Only now the Dalai Lama stood in Sher Ali's place, Dorzhiev played the part of General Kaufmann and Curzon was Lytton.⁵² "I regard it as our duty to frustrate this little game while there is still time," he declared in London.⁵³

Against its better judgement, the home Government gave the Viceroy its assent and Colonel Francis Younghusband was despatched along with an escort of 1,000 Gurkha and Sikh troops to parlay with the Tibetans in 1903. Defended by a mediaeval force armed with matchlocks and charms bearing the Dalai Lama's personal seal, Lhasa was in no condition to enforce its exclusionary policy, and on 3 August 1904, Younghusband marched into the capital.

Despite rumours of Russian agents and secret arms shipments, Younghusband found no evidence of any Tsarist intrigue. The antiquated weaponry brandished by the Dalai Lama's troops provided the clearest proof that Lhasa had not been the recipient of any clandestine aid from its northern neighbour. Nicholas's vague promises

of support to Dorzhiev failed to materialize into any concrete action, even as the Dalai Lama and his Buriat confidant were fleeing to Urga. Distracted by more pressing matters in Manchuria and elsewhere in Asia, Russia did little more than protest England's aggression through normal channels.

Colonel Younghusband's march on Lhasa presented Russia with a *fait accompli*, and the Tibet question receded into obscurity once again. Three years later, the Anglo-Russian Accord resolved the issues of Persia, Afghanistan, as well as Tibet, sounding the closing bell of the Great Game's last round. The former adversaries were now concerned about the rise of German militarism, and the threat of Prussian arms seemed much more immediate than the strategic balance in Central Asia. Ironically, upon his return to Lhasa, the Dalai Lama was to find Albion to be considerably less perfidious than he had imagined, and until his death in 1933, he was to be on excellent terms with Great Britain. Russia, meanwhile, was to be preoccupied with its own problems, and would never again enjoy the stature it had in Tibet in the days of Lama Dorzhiev.

England's decision to invade Tibet was motivated more by Curzon's Russophobia than by a realistic assessment of Tsarist policy. Russia never really had a policy for Tibet. Until the reign of Nicholas II, the only Russians to concern themselves with the exotic land were orientalist, geographers, and the Asiatic Department's file clerks. For a brief period, as a result of Przhewalsky's expeditions and the Silver Age's flirtation with the Far East, Tibet was in the public eye. Yet despite the efforts of such highly-placed men as Peter Badmaev and Prince Esper Ukhtomsky to fashion a coherent strategy for Tibet, the Russian foreign ministry remained profoundly indifferent. Even when the 13th Dalai Lama took the unprecedented step of dispatching an envoy to St Petersburg, the Tsar failed to reciprocate the move.

A definitive account of Russia and Tibet at the turn of the century must await a perusal of the relevant Tsarist archives. However, a dry run with the sources available in North America suggests that, as far as Russia was concerned, Tibet was a minor side-show of the Great Game. British perceptions of Muscovite intrigues at the Potala were nothing more than the flickering shadows cast by real tournaments elsewhere in Central Asia.

Notes

- 1 Gary Alder, *Beyond Bokhara: The Life of William Moorcroft* (London: Century, 1985), p. 147.
- 2 *Ibid.*, p. 147.
- 3 Alexandre Ular, *Un Empire russo-chinois* (Paris: Félix Juven, c.1900), p. 24.
- 4 A. Tom Grunfeld, *The Making of Modern Tibet* (Armonk, NY: Sharpe, 1987), p. 52.
- 5 The most authoritative study of the Indian Army's thinking about this problem is the privately-published work of the head of its military intelligence establishment, Major-General Sir Charles MacGregor, *The Defence of India* (Simla, 1883).
- 6 For example, see Archibald Colquhoun, *Russia Against India* (New York: Harper, 1900); H. Sutherland Edwards, *Russia Against India* (London: Remington, 1885), George Makepiece Towle, *England and Russia in Asia* (London: Grant Richards, 1899); Arminius Vambéry, *The Coming Struggle for India* (London: Cassell, 1885).
- 7 Alastair Lamb, *Britain and Chinese Central Asia* (London, 1960), p. 49.
- 8 Ekai Kawaguchi, *Three Years in Tibet* (Madras: Theosophical Society, 1909), p. 495.
- 9 Tibetan Buddhist monasteries.

- 10 Captain Samuel Turner, *An Account of an Embassy to the Court of the Teshoo Lama in Tibet* (London, Bulmer, 1806), p. 273 and George Woodcock, *Into Tibet: The Early British Explorers* (London: Faber & Faber, 1971), p. 112.
- 11 Turner, *op. cit.*, p. 272.
- 12 A. Lobdanov-Rostovsky, *Russia and Asia* (Ann Arbor: George Wahr, 1951), p. 214.
- 13 D. C. B. Lieven, ed., *British Documents on Foreign Affairs, Part 1, Series 1, Russia, 1859–1914* (University Press of America, 1983), Vol. 2, p. 306.
- 14 In this sense, the Foreign Minister's geographic designation was a misnomer, since the Asiatic Department was concerned with all diplomatic activity not related to Europe, including that of Africa and the Americas.
- 15 See Meng Ssu-Ming, "The E-Lo-Ssu Kuan (Russian Hostel) in Peking," in *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies* 23 (1960–61), pp. 19–46.
- 16 M. M. Vorob'eva-Desyatorskaya and L.S. Savitsky, "The Tibetan Repository of the Leningrad Academy of Sciences, USSR" in *Tibet Journal* IV, 3 (Autumn 1981), p. 6.
- 17 Charles Marvin, *The Russian Advance toward India* (London: Sampson Low, 1882), pp. 191–2.
- 18 Hauner, *What is Asia to Us?* (London: Routledge, 1992), p. 41.
- 19 Donald Rayfield, *The Dream of Lhasa* (London: Elek, 1976).
- 20 *Ibid.*, p. 191.
- 21 *Ibid.*, pp. 203–4.
- 22 *Ibid.*, p. 52.
- 23 *Ibid.*, p. 111.
- 24 Andrew Malomemzoff, *Russia's Far Eastern Policy* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1958), p. 42.
- 25 Rayfield, *op. cit.*, p. 151.
- 26 In Ford, *Russian Far Eastern Diplomacy* (University of Chicago Unpublished PhD Thesis, 1951), p. 100.
- 27 Vladimir Solovev, *Stikhotvoreniia i Shutochnie P'esi* (Munich: Fink, 1968), pp. 239 and 96–7, respectively.
- 28 In Hauner, *op. cit.*, p. 55.
- 29 In Hauner, *op. cit.*, pp. 38–39.
- 30 Tsar Alexander III had stood as Badmaev's godfather when he was baptised. Closer to 1917, Badmaev briefly collaborated with Rasputin in the latter's ministrations to the haemophilic Tsarevitch Alexis. See Victor Alexandrov, *The End of the Romanovs* (Boston: Little, Brown, 1966), p. 118.
- 31 Boris Gusev, "Moi ded Zhamsaran Badmaev" in *Novyi Mir* 11 (1989), p. 210.
- 32 P. A. Badmaev, *Za kulisami tsarizma* (Leningrad: Gosudarstvennoe Izdalel'stvo, 1925), p. 210.
- 33 Malomemzoff, *op. cit.*, pp. 43–44.
- 34 Prince E. Oukhtomsky, *Travels in the East of Nicholas II when Cesarewitch*, Vol. 11 (Westminster: Constable, 1900), p. 345.
- 35 Prince Esper E. Ukhomsky, *Iz Oblasti Lamaizma* (St Petersburg: Vostok, 1904), p. 3. For an English abridgement of this tract see Prince Esper Oukhtomsky, "The English in Tibet" in *North American Review* 179 (1904), pp. 24–9.
- 36 In Ford, *op. cit.*, pp. 105–6.
- 37 S. S. Ol'denbourg, *Tsarstvovanie Imperatora Nikolaia II* (Belgrade: Obshchestva Rasprostraneniia Russkoi Natsional'noi i Patrioticheskoi Literaturi, 1939), pp. 113.
- 38 V. I. Gurko, *Facts and Figures of the Past* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1939), pp. 256–7.
- 39 Steven O. Marks, *Road to Power* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1991), p. 136.
- 40 In Kazemzadeh, Firuz, *Russia and Britain in Persia* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1968), p. 339.
- 41 Malomemzoff, *op. cit.*, p. 163.
- 42 A. Popov, "Rossiia i Tibet" in *Novii Vostok* 18 (1927–8), p. 114.
- 43 Great Britain East India Office, *Papers Relating to Tibet* (London: HMSO, 1904), pp. 113–14.

- 44 *Ibid.*, pp. 117-18.
- 45 Tibetan Buddhist monasteries.
- 46 Rayfield, *op. cit.*, p. 207.
- 47 Ekai Kawaguchi, *op. cit.*, pp. 497-8.
- 48 Tokan Tada, *The Thirteenth Dalai Lama* (Tokyo: Centre for East Asian Cultural Studies, 1965), p. 39.
- 49 A. Lobdanov-Rostovsky, *op. cit.*, p. 207.
- 50 In Premen Addy, *Tibet on the Imperial Chessboard* (Calcutta: Academic Publishers, 1984), p. 69.
- 51 In Lamb, *op. cit.*, p. 56.
- 52 Purshotam Mehra, *The Younghusband Expedition* (London: Asia Publishing House, 1968), p. 42.
- 53 In Lamb, *op. cit.*, p. 60.

AGVAN DORJIEV, THE DALAI LAMA'S AMBASSADOR

Nikolai Kuleshov

Source: *Asian Affairs* 23(1) (1992): pp. 20–33.

Agvan Dorjiev was a person, “for whom as a man we must have the highest regard. He is looked upon in Russia as the very embodiment of the entire Tibetan Buddhist World and its most worthy representative both inside and outside that great country”. These are the final words of the article on Agvan Dorjiev in “Asian Affairs” (February 1990). Accepting so high an estimation of Dorjiev as a man, it is necessary to note that it is a onesided testimonial which is limited mainly to the religious sphere. However he is worthy of no less regard as a statesman and diplomat.

Many publications of his ungrateful descendants continue to repeat the negative assessment of Dorjiev, which appeared at the beginning of the century as the result of lack of information and under the pressing influence of emotions and political passions. An impartial attitude to Dorjiev and the proper estimation of his personality and his activity, however, serve to correct the historiography and to give a new understanding of the history of international relations.

Agvan Dorjiev, a Buryat from Transbaikalia, a Russian subject for about three decades, served the Thirteenth Dalai Lama faithfully as tutor in theological disputes and then as an official for important state missions. When he was young he drew the attention of scientific lamas with his successful studies in Buddhism; owing, to these achievements he found himself in sacred Lhasa. His very wide knowledge of Buddhism and his outstanding abilities brought him victories in competitions and concourses with other theologians and made him one of the first theocrats of Tibet, who had ruled in the country from ancient times.

He did not conceal his Russian origin and citizenship from his associates and this impeded his career. Nevertheless, his natural intellect, noted by all contemporaries, allowed him to draw close to the Dalai Lama and then to become the latter's devoted adviser in ruling the State.

Though a stranger, Dorjiev served faithfully in the diplomatic sphere at the end of the 19th and the beginning of the 20th century, when the Tibetans showed their resolution to defend their country from foreign encroachments.

This episode in the history of Tibet during the first fifteen years of the 20th century, when the country became subject to outside forces and stood forth as the maker of its own destiny, has not so far been exhaustively explained. It showed the awakening in

Tibet of national and foreign political activities, which were expressed by the Dalai Lama's envoy Dorjiev. Owing to this development, the "Tibetan issue" appeared on the pages of the world press and provided study for contemporary political specialists and subsequent historiographers right up to the present day, when very limited and occasionally strained Chinese-Indian relations during four decades again and again clashed over the unresolved problems of the frontiers between the two countries. These problems arose mainly at the Simla conference of 1914 between China, Great Britain and Tibet, and the conference itself was the consequence of Tibetan events and the Tibetan policy of cultivating the Great Powers, in which Dorjiev's missions played an essential part.

A history of the Tibetan policy of courting the Great Powers – China, Great Britain and Russia – is no doubt needed because of the use of erroneous postulates in modern historiography to prove that Russia acted in recent history in an expansionist fashion by striving to seize one of the parts of China, namely – Tibet.

Russian historiography, as a rule, bashfully does not mention this subject, despite the fact that the actual documents in the Russian Foreign Policy Archives point eloquently to the absence of even a hint of the said expansion. As for contemporary Chinese historians, the ideological blinkers of their social-class determinism make them use only anti-Dorjiev rhetoric, which leaves no basis for a serious discussion; for example, you can read the report of the Chinese chargé d'affaires in Petersburg, Hu Waide, indignantly describing Dorjiev as "quite European" because of his suit and manners. This is the only Chinese archive document cited by Zhou Weizhou in his book as proof of the anti-Chinese "evil deeds" of Dorjiev.¹

The most important stimulus for developing Tibet's activity in foreign policy was the change of leadership in Tibet and in neighbouring India: in 1894 the Thirteenth Dalai Lama was inaugurated in Lhasa and in January 1899 Lord Curzon became the Viceroy of British India.

While the new Dalai Lama considered obtaining the full independence of Tibet to be his first task, Lord Curzon had quite contrary plans. Up to that time a series of agreements was signed concerning the possession of the territories along the border between India and Tibet. These agreements were crowned by the Chinese-British arrangement on Sikkim, fixed in the Convention of 1890. It established a British protectorate over Sikkim. The Sikkimese perspective was possible also for Tibet. Chinese historians, discussing the motives of the Tibetans in opposing the agreement between the Chinese Ch'ing Emperor and the Indian Administration, wrote that "the Tibetan people, being discontented with the Convention of 1890 and abhorring the Ch'ing rulers, could not sell the Motherland short, or the idea of territorial sovereignty. It decidedly changed its position and turned to the side of Russia".²

The new orientation of Tibet was well understood by contemporary observers. It was not a momentary decision but was made after Tibetan envoys had visited the European countries, seeking among them a reliable defender of Tibetan interests. The conclusion they reached, as the Chinese author writes, was that "only Russia can help Tibet".³

These envoys were headed by Dorjiev. Later on he wrote: "When the Chinese officials took the bribe and reduced the territory of Tibet (i.e., accepted the protectorate over Sikkim according to the Convention of 1890 – N.K.), the upper strata of Tibet initiated secret conferences on the necessity for the patronage of some foreign state.

At one of these conferences I expressed my opinion, giving my preferences in favour of Russia".⁴

It was not so simple merely "to express an opinion" and thereby to resolve all problems. All the more since this opinion was expressed by a non-Tibetan; the Tibetans, isolated from the outside world, were suspicious of and hostile to that world.

In Russia itself Dorjiev was also unknown: neither diplomats, nor the secret intelligence service had any information on him. It was learned at the beginning, that "in a comparatively short time he had made a good career in Lhasa. At the age of 35 he passed the examination and as one of 2,000 lamas of the three great monasteries of Lhasa received the scientific degree of Lharambe. He considered Russia as his native land, himself as a Russian subject; and had revealed his origin to the Dalai Lama".⁵

After his arrival in Russia, in a detailed letter to the Russian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Dorjiev gave information about his roots, his ancestors, the delicacy of his position in Tibet as a foreigner, who did not hide his Russian origin, serving as counsellor of the Dalai Lama, with certain influential Tibetans demanding his removal. In addition, he had kept to his primary aim of disseminating a good image of his native land and tried by all means to predispose the Tibetans in Russia's favour. In the same letter he wrote: "In 1888 the French Prince of Orleans came to Tibet with the intention of arranging connections with that country, telling the Tibetans that: 'We Frenchmen can save Tibet from the Englishmen. France and Russia have entered into alliance and thus reached the greatest might in the world'. These words of the Prince of Orleans confirmed the truth of my stories about the might of Russia. Since then the Tibetan Tsar and dignitaries began with great interest to apply to me for information on Russia and Europe as well. My conviction that, owing to its stagnation, bad government and the corruption of its officials, China is on the eve of its downfall, has many proofs".⁶

The background of world policy – the rivalry of the European countries in Europe and in Asia during previous decades, the defeat of China in the war against Japan at the end of the 19th century, the steady degradation of the Ch'ing regime in China culminating in the Sinhai revolution of 1911 – all these events make one understand the difficult position of Tibet at the beginning of the 20th century and serve to explain Dorjiev's diplomacy. He wrote: "In 1898 I was sent to study personally the life and statehood of China, Russia and France. Starting through India and China, I went first of all to Transbaikalia – my native land, then to Petersburg. There in December 1898 I was introduced to the Tsar".⁷

As the documents show, the first voyage of Dorjiev was not an official diplomatic mission but it did have definite aims. His introduction to the Tsar did not result in definite negotiations, despite the enthusiasm which was displayed by some officials over the arrival of Dorjiev in Petersburg. In reply to the Dalai Lama's request for Russian help to Tibet the Tsar announced a desire "to receive the request officially in written form". (This was the first time Dorjiev verbally expressed this request in the name of the Dalai Lama). As is evident, the Tsar's reaction to the Tibetan initiative was a diplomatic excuse, which was the start of a chain of Russian excuses, restraint and refusals to establish close connections with Tibet.

From Petersburg Dorjiev sent Zaisan Avshe Norzunov, a Kalmyk, with a letter to the Dalai Lama, "describing in detail the greatness of the Russian people, the critical situation of China and expressing the opinion that the connection with Russia promises a great future for Tibet".⁸

He then travelled to France. There he received a letter from the Dalai Lama, who demanded his return to Lhasa. The return journey was via Peking, Calcutta and Darjeeling. It was a safe way at first; as the Tibetans did not usually travel there and back, Dorjiev claimed to be a Mongol with Chinese citizenship. He had obtained his passport from the Chinese amban in Lhasa for 25 liang (silver coins). Later on he used this way repeatedly, but the travelling became less safe; the local authorities finally began hunting for him as the official who conducted a policy, which they did not like.

After returning to Lhasa, Dorjiev was received by the Dalai Lama "cordially, with trust and charity. It became clear after the conversation, that when the pontiff offered my letter to ministers to read, they decided not to seek an ally elsewhere and rejected France, which earlier than other countries had expressed the wish to establish relations. Some ministers tried to make friends with the Englishmen, because as enemies in neighbourhood they could be the cause of troubles. However, the majority of the council remained of the opinion that the best way is to address Russia, where Buddhism prospers freely".⁹

At the beginning of 1900 the Dalai Lama sent him again to Russia for a definite answer from the Tsar, supplying him with an official letter and a gift for the Tsar. This time the reception took place in Livadia. However this also produced no result, so long as Dorjiev's plenary powers were not registered officially in the proper way. He had to return to Lhasa in January 1901, but soon left it once again.

Striving to obtain audience of the Tsar, Dorjiev repeatedly wrote what made him come to Petersburg: "Owing to the changes of the previous years in China, the ruling circles of Tibet discussed the measures to be taken; one side advised application to Great Britain, another side considered it to be better to obtain help from France, the third side insisted that there would be advantage for Tibetan interests from the help and patronage of Russia whose mighty domination provides prosperity for the confession of Buddhism. The last opinion triumphed over the others and all Tibetans decided to beg the patronage of the Russian Tsar".¹⁰

His repeated explanations why the Tibetans addressed Russia testify that Petersburg was far from "taking control" of Tibetan affairs, and Dorjiev had to start all over again, displaying outstanding tenacity and patience.

"The changes of the previous years in China", mentioned in Dorjiev's address, which induced the Tibetans to send missions to various countries and finally to Russia, were the following: the traditional connection of the Dalai Lama with the Ch'ing dynasty over previous centuries provided security for Tibet from outside troubles; however towards the end of this nineteenth century these traditional connections ceased to function. What is more, the agreement on Sikkim already mentioned appreciably disturbed Tibetan interests, since up to then the traditional close dynastic and religious connections between the two created the image of Sikkim as a part of Tibet; the agreement demonstrated the new balance of the power and the new inter-relations in the Himalayan region, which developed under the "he hao tziui mian" (policy of peace and consensus) of the Ch'ing government in its relations with the Europeans.¹¹

The Dalai Lama's letter delivered by Dorjiev was written in Tibetan and Mongolian and was sent for translation to St. Petersburg university, (but not to the Russian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, which meant that the government in Petersburg intended not to attach any official importance to it). The Mongolian text of the letter was

translated, the Tibetan text was not, because "among the teachers of St. Petersburg university there was no person, who knew the Tibetan language". The relevant passage reads: "Your Majesty does not reject people, who confess different religions . . . and especially expresses solicitude towards the Buddhist Kalmyks and Buryats . . .".¹²

The Tsar's reply to the Dalai Lama informed him diplomatically that from the conversation with Dorjiev "it was a pleasure to know about your wish to establish regular connections between the Russian State and Tibet, and it was incumbent upon me to give the necessary explanations on this subject to your ambassadors".

As one can see, the Tsar's reply was evasive.

Besides the Dalai Lama's letter the Tibetan mission, consisting of Dorjiev, and high ranking Tibetans – viz, Kainchoc, the Second Secretary of the Dalai Lama, Pingtsoc, the District Superior, and others, also delivered a letter from the head of the Dalai Lama's palace administration and of the calons (Tibetan ministers), which reads, in particular: "After the foreigners began to express a hostile attitude to the Tibetan state, we – not forgetting the Bogdohang and not showing sympathy to the hostile foreigners – sent the close attendants of the Dalai Lama with the aim of connecting the Russians and Tibetans in peace and combining them in some kind of kindred relationship". The letter contained the request "to heed our written exhortations concerning a good peace".¹³

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Russia in its reply expressed no wishes concerning the subject. The Minister wrote: "I did not fail to ascertain with the help of your ambassadors the means for establishing communications with Tibet. I also expressed the hope that the measures taken and the achieved results will fully correspond to the wishes expressed by you. I have no doubt that, owing to your sage and prudent wishes, no destruction in the future will touch Tibet, given the customary goodwill to the latter from Russia".¹⁴

The Minister's reply was thus evasive as well. Russian foreign policy in general did not fall in with the Tibetan suggestion for the establishment of official relations. Having no political, military or economic interests in Tibet, the Russian government "undoubtedly wished to preserve the status quo in Tibet".¹⁵ without reference to the definite projects of the Dalai Lama's government concerning Russia. The Russian government was interested in the status quo in Tibet not for any plans of an economic, political or military nature: as a Great Power it bore responsibility for the status quo in any part of the world, including Tibet: *noblesse oblige*.

The government of the Viceroy in India considered these projects extremely negatively. This attitude was formed under the influence of the imperial ambitions of Lord Curzon as well as the traditions of Anglo-Russian rivalry from the previous century. During the nineteenth century this rivalry was the leit-motif of the relations between two countries, especially in the time of the Crimean War 1853–1856, when Sevastopol was seized, the Baltic sea was blockaded and the Solovetsk monastery was bombarded. The confrontation between the two countries continued for decades not in military collisions, but yet in a sharp enough form. At the very beginning of the twentieth century (just at the time of Dorjiev's diplomatic activity) London dispatched to Berlin an offer to conclude an Anglo-German military and political agreement against Russia "as long as Russia wanted to capture India and Constantinople". The inertia of the Anglo-Russian rivalry held up the signing of the Entente Cordiale until as late as 1907.

This situation gave birth to rumours that Russia had concluded secret treaties with Tibet and China concerning a Russian protectorate over Tibet; the treaties were said to provide Russian guarantees of China's integrity, and China in its turn relinquished all its interests in Tibet in favour of Russia. The British government surely realised that the "he hao tsiui mian" policy provided serious arguments not to believe the rumours. The Russian Ambassador in London, in a conversation with the Head of the Foreign Office, referring to his government's instructions, gave an assurance that "there is no agreement on Tibet; the Russian government has no agents in Tibet and has no intention of sending there either consul or envoy". He even expressed surprise concerning this British enquiry. The ambassador also stated that "the Russian government has no plans on Tibet".¹⁶

The Russian Ministry of Foreign Affairs informed the Foreign Office of the content of the Russian-Tibetan negotiations, including the detailed account of Dorjiev's offers when he was received by the Tsar and the content of their conversations. This information was later published in the press. Besides the information from the Foreign Office the British press had other sources, namely its correspondents who reported the arrival of the Tibetan envoy in Odessa from personal observation. "When the members of the mission of the Great Lama of Tibet arrived here yesterday, they were met with real Russian cordiality, with bread and salt on a gold-plated tray. This is the form of Russian hospitality, passed down from the ancient times of Russia, and it produced a deep and pleasant impression on the Lamas".

Dorjiev's journey was discussed widely in the press. He was welcomed with suitable honour, according, to his high rank. By orders from "the highest level" he was granted "free transport along the Russian communications and all possible comfort for his journey". The Russian press covered Dorjiev's journey from his starting point in Odessa. The newspaper *Odesskie novosti* reported the celebration in honour of the Tibetan envoy by the town authorities as though it were a holiday spectacle: "By the time of the envoy's arrival the railway station platform (in the health resort Kuialnik Liman in the suburb of old Odessa – N.K.) was over-crowded. An orchestra played. Tea and refreshments were arranged in the garden which was crammed with the festive public. The members of the embassy neither drink alcoholic liquor nor smoke. At 11 o'clock brilliant fireworks were set off, ending with the initials of Dalai Lama in fiery gold on the black background of the night. Before the departure of the mission to the town its head was presented with a splendid bunch of white roses and the desire was expressed that this colour – the symbol of peace – will be the guarantee of constant, peaceful relations between Russia and Tibet".¹⁷

In spite of the voluminous information on Dorjiev's mission in the Russian and foreign press, some historians persist in calling them "secret envoys". This term is conditioned by the treatment of Anglo-Russian relations in Asia exclusively from the point of view of the rivalry between the two Great Powers, e.g. the "Russian menace" and "Russian intrigues" in Tibet. Dorjiev is described as a great malefic and a Russian spy.

Discrediting Dorjiev as a Russian agent is not new. It dates from the beginning of the twentieth century in the press; then it was consolidated in the 1920s, when the old publications became part of history. In 1924, following C. Bell, the German orientalist W. F. Filchner, who was interested in "the history of struggle and intrigue in Central Asia", expressed his opinion (but not facts or proofs – N.K.), that "Dorjiev entered

the Russian service in 1885".¹⁸ In our days the American diplomat and historian D. McGregor writes: "It is difficult to date the beginning of Dorjiev's secret service. Perhaps he was recruited by the Russian service when he was working in the fourth expedition of Prjevalsky in 1884".¹⁹ Unfortunately Dr. J. Kolmaš also subscribed to this version: "He (Dorjiev) was entrusted with secret missions from the Dalai Lama in 1899, 1900 and 1901".²⁰ Fact and documents prove, that those missions continued to 1913, and were not secret. Russian authors on the theme know, of course, this dark image of Dorjiev in the foreign press; they know also the tragic fate of Dorjiev as a man and this smattering of knowledge gave rise to statements no less strange, for example: "The foreign press made a fuss about the Russian menace only in consequence of the pilgrimage of the Russian subject Agvan Dorjiev to Lhasa and his conversations with the Dalai Lama".²¹

The absence of Russian-Tibetan agreements as a result of Dorjiev's missions did not prevent the foreign press discussing all sorts of news about such agreements. At the same time the Ch'ing officials took measures to create the impression of Russian activity in forcing penetration into Tibet. The British political officer in Sikkim stated that the Chinese Amban in Lhasa, in a private conversation, expressed the opinion that the British administration in India had to concert its actions with the amban's opinions, otherwise the Tibetans would again turn to Russia, who had offered them its help.²² Thus was stirred up anti-Russian agitation.

The wave of press publications and diplomatic correspondence, provoked by Dorjiev's mission, did not correspond to the purposes of the mission. It did not succeed in achieving its aims; the Russian officials were too slow to move in Tibetan affairs; they neglected or missed the definite political benefits to be gained from intervention in these affairs. At that time the *Journal of The Ministry of Public Education* wrote: "The legend of 'the evil genius' of the Dalai Lama, Humbo Agvan Dorjiev, turned out to be dark and confusing. One thing is clear, Agvan Dorjiev wished to persuade the Tibetans to rely on Russia – the safe and remote patron. It was not his Russian sympathies which swayed Dorjiev, but the idea of benefits for Tibet. A clever man, who during his life visited China, Russia, Berlin, Paris and London, Agvan Dorjiev understood that salvation could come only by using the benefits arising from the dissonances and contradictions in the concert of the European Powers".²³

The leading part in these dissonances was played by the mystification, which distorted the real picture of events as well as the participants in these events. This was well realised by Dorjiev himself. In his memorandum on the situation in Tibet, addressed to the Russian Ministry of Foreign Affairs in February 1913, he wrote: "In the past I was described as an agent of the Russian government, as a man who was bribed by Russia to kindle animosity between Tibet and Great Britain. A high reward was set for catching me. I could hardly steal away from the Indian police at the Nepal border".²⁴

His missions to Russia and the audiences he had with the Tsar in Livadia, in Peterhoff palace and in St Petersburg did not lead to a bilateral agreement between Tibet and Russia, nor to the establishment of official relations between them. This negative result had dramatic consequences for Tibet because the absence of agreement untied the Indian administration's hands. Lord Curzon from the beginning of his term of office in India promoted a "forward policy", which was the principle behind the colonisation of India in previous decades. His initial attempts to come to terms

with the Dalai Lama (similar attempts had given good results in dealing with local Indian rulers) had no result; the colonial authorities then prepared an armed intervention in Tibet.

The failure of Dorjiev's missions to Russia made possible the Younghusband mission in "the black year for Tibet". The terms of the Lhasa Convention of 1904 significantly limited Tibet's independence. However, the narrow colonialist tendencies of Lord Curzon did not correspond to the global interests of the British Empire. The British government, taking part in the "concert of the European Powers", had to consider the reaction of the other participants of the concert to its actions in Asia. It abstained from new territorial gains, including Tibet. That is why, after deciding on the Younghusband mission with great reservation and reluctance, it did not wish to take advantage of the provisions of the Lhasa Convention and conceded them to the Ch'ing government. It was not an infrequent bargain. Chinese historians noted the widespread view of the Ch'ing government as powerless, with no capacity or will to be an active or aggressive force. They consider such views to be erroneous. The well-known Chinese historian Hu Sheng wrote that "many authors studying the history of China, voluntarily or not, created this mistaken conception. They describe the policy of the European countries in Chinese territory very primitively. In their view, the Ch'ing government dragged out a miserable existence, being constantly disgraced by the Powers. This kind of view is erroneous and did not correspond to the Historical truth".²⁵ (Hu Shen's assertion is repeated in seven editions of his book in China).

The Ch'ing-British "policy of peace and consensus" became one more cause (besides the European factor) of solving Tibet's problems. The Peking Agreement of 1906 included the Lhasa Convention of 1904 as an appendix, thus subordinating Tibet to China. She Su noted in this case: "The fate of the Lhasa Convention was quite different from that which Lord Curzon and other aggressively-minded statesmen had dreamed of."²⁶

The same purport lay behind the subsequent Anglo-Russian Convention of 1907 and in the text of the Simla Convention of 1914, which was coordinated by British, Chinese and Tibetan representatives at the Simla Conference. The chain of diplomatic and military measures was designed for subduing and suppressing Tibet. At the same time these measures determined the mode of action for the Ch'ing government in Tibet which had grave consequences, including the war waged for many years by the Tibetans against the punitive army of general Chao Erfung, and led to the aggravation of the antagonism between Chinese and Tibetans. These events made Dorjiev's missions more and more essential and important. The Russian government refused Tibet's request to participate in a solution of her affairs but this was not understood in London since this abstention did not "blend" with the conception of Anglo-Russian rivalry, which had determined the model of Anglo-Russian relations during previous decades. The assurances and protestations of the Russian diplomats in London and St. Petersburg about the lack of plans for Tibet in Russian foreign policy were treated with distrust.

In spite of Dorjiev's efforts over many years in Russia, the Russian government did not promise its help to Tibet. It also avoided (according to one document in the archives) encouraging in any form the Tibetan pontiff's separatist projects concerning China. In the historiography of the problem Tibet and its ruler the Dalai Lama are treated usually as puppets and small change in world policy. However, in practice

neither the Dalai Lama, nor his retainers were puppets of the British or Ch'ing empires, and of course they were not Russian *protégés*. There is no basis for thinking that the fundamental and primary cause of the collision was Tibet's search for the help of a foreign power with the sole purpose of separation from China. The Ch'ing amban in Lhasa had not only a vast Empire as background, but the ancient rich Chinese civilisation which included the Tibetans themselves. The Dalai Lama and his retainers stood aside both from the active armed struggle against Younghusband and against Chao Erfung. It must be noted that the resistance to the Younghusband mission was spontaneous and finally completed with the visit of the Dalai Lama to Peking. The war against Chao Erfung was merciless, and the Dalai Lama sought to damp down and abate it, partly by force of pacifism, partly for political reasons, in so far as open hostility to the Chinese government was not in accordance with the traditional model of the relations between China and Tibet, formed during almost 1,500 years. These relations were not, however, those of sovereign and vassal, rather of patron and client, since Tibet had its own way of life, statehood and independence to a considerable degree. At any rate, Tibet and its ruler were not puppets and marionettes.

The Younghusband expedition to Lhasa in 1904 compelled the Dalai Lama to flee from the capital. Dorjiev was his adviser and guide during the flight. Dorjiev's close ties with the Mongolian as well as the Buryat clergy created good conditions for him to accompany the Dalai Lama to Urga (Ulan Baator). Probably under his influence Russia was suggested as a place of emigration but the Dalai Lama finally preferred to stay in Buddhist Mongolia among the great number of pilgrims gathering from everywhere, including from neighbouring Russia. A few years later he returned from Urga, although he remained in Lhasa for only a short time being forced to flee yet again this time owing to the advance of Chao Erfung's army. Flight to Mongolia was now impossible because special Ch'ing detachments were sent to capture him and claim the generous reward.

During his emigration to India in 1910 and later, the Dalai Lama constantly expressed the hope in his letters that Russia would apply decisive influence for a solution of the Tibetan problem. Dorjiev did not accompany the Dalai Lama to India. He was afraid of being arrested by the local authorities in order to end his influence on the Dalai Lama. In spite of this the latter believed in Russia and in Dorjiev's success in St. Petersburg. In one of his letters, sent through Dorjiev, he wrote: "I hope, that the government of His Majesty knows why I had to go to India and not to Russia. The high government has to trust me; my deep devotion to Russia has been clear and constant from the beginning and will be such in the future. Only temporary conditions do not allow me to tell about my devotion more expressively. Now enjoying moral satisfaction from my stay in sacred India, I hope that, owing to the mercy of the most High Buddha, I shall be able to lead my country from its hard situation only with the help of great Russia".²⁷

The Dalai Lama's attempts to maintain connections with Russia should not be overestimated from the sober political point of view. Sentiment played hardly any role. The prime calculation was that Russia was far from Tibet and it could thus be assumed that its patronage would be effective, honourable and trustworthy but not excessive; and that it would not involve any pretension by Russia to impose its will on Tibet. Dorjiev's letters and other documents contained no such argument. However, he could no doubt adduce proofs of this kind. Unfortunately, while Russia occupied

a leading place in the plans of Tibet, Tibet itself did not figure at all in the plans of Russia. That is why the Tibetan letters delivered by Dorjiev to the Russian government were left without reply. Beautifully written on vast paper sheets of distinctive Tibetan manufacture, with large bright red stamps as signatures, these letters were extremely courteous, often affecting and tragical with their appeals for help. However, the Russian government did not accept them as official documents. The St. Petersburg newspaper *Rech* wrote at that time: "The Russian government treats these letters as a private correspondence and does not recognize Dorjiev as the Dalai Lama's representative. Dorjiev in Petersburg is a spokesman for spiritual affairs".²⁸

Dorjiev's indefatigability and persistence did not lead to success. There was no evil design on Russia's part, but at the same time there was no interest either. According to the minutes of the conversation at the reception of Dorjiev on 7 March 1910, the Minister of Foreign Affairs declared, in reply to a question by Dorjiev, that he (the Minister) had no exact information on Tibetan events and therefore could not formulate the position of Russian government on these events. "In any case the Russian government continues as hitherto to treat the Dalai Lama with full benevolence. Of course, it is impossible for Russia to meddle in Tibetan affairs. In treating the Dalai Lama with benevolence, the Russian government does not refuse to give him Moral support".²⁹

Russia thus adhered only to the Dalai Lama's position in Tibetan affairs and did not put itself under any obligation. The non-governmental organs were even more definite. The newspaper *Rossiya* at that time wrote in connection with the second flight of the Dalai Lama from Lhasa: "Well, tell us for the sake of the God, what business have we in Tibet with its Dalai Lama? In order to display an active interest in Tibet, it is necessary to have some right or at least some exclusive and real benefits, which would justify such kind of interference and interest. But in this case we have neither".³⁰

The only Russian international agreement, the Anglo-Russian Convention of 1907 officially registered Russia's non-interference in Tibet and thus demonstrated her political indifference to Tibet. Here we should recall once again the resumé of the British side on the Russian position: Minister of Foreign Affairs S. D. Sazonoff was really implying "that it does not matter what we do in Tibet if only it is done *sub rosa*".³¹

Nevertheless Dorjiev continued to seek guarantees against troubles in Tibet. In his address to S. D. Sazonoff in 1911 he wrote: "According to my deep conviction, the above-mentioned and very possible troubles could be successfully overcome by the establishment of joint patronage of Tibet by Russia and Great Britain, based on certain agreed acts in order to resolve more or less all major misunderstandings jointly by representatives of the parties involved. This measure will be able to pacify completely Tibetan public opinion and to give the desirable results. The presence in Lhasa of representatives of Russia and Great Britain could inspire confidence in the Tibetans that they need not be afraid of forced measures and that under the patronage of the two Great Powers Tibetans can achieve a peaceful arrangement of their internal affairs".³²

The diplomatic service of Agvan Dorjiev did not end with his mission to Russia. The Sinhai revolution in China in 1911 brought about the attenuation of the war of Chao Erfung and his punitive army and further strengthened Tibet's new role in the international sphere. In 1913 Dorjiev, on orders from the Dalai Lama, signed in

Urga a Tibetan-Mongolian agreement, which demonstrated the increased international significance of Tibet. This agreement allowed Tibet, as an equal participant in the Simla Conference on 1913–14, to defend its interests. From the formal point of view the conference added nothing to the country's new role, but it strengthened its capacity for self-defence, which was the aim of Dorjiev and his missions.

The political predilections, instability and contradictions of the next decades on one side, and the conservatism of the Tibetan theocrats of that time, who hoped to stay safely behind the high Himalayan mountains, to escape the world's troubles and shocks on the other, prevented the developing and strengthening of this new role of Tibet's. Only in the second half of this century did the world community turn its eyes again toward Tibet with sympathy, from a new, humanitarian position, proclaiming the human right for persons and countries of free and independent development.

After completing his high humane mission for Tibet Agvan Dorjiev went through Mongolia to St. Petersburg; – he never returned to Lhasa. The Dalai Lama and the Tibetan government invited him to come from St. Petersburg to attend the Simla Conference. However, he never managed to return either to India or to Tibet. The object of his special care – the Buddhist temple in St. Petersburg – was erected and on 10 August 1915 was sanctified and opened.

After the revolution of 1917 Dorjiev devoted himself entirely to social and religious activities. During the subsequent famine in the Kalmyk steppe he organised, with exceptional energy and initiative, the collection of foodstuffs and money in his native Buryatia. As a Buddhist public figure, he spoke out for religious renovation, seeking contacts with the masses and trying to construct a new Buddhism adapted to socialist ideals – with little success. In 1919 the Buddhist temple in St. Petersburg was plundered and vandalised. It was not shut down, but was out of operation for many years. By 1937 all the remaining lamas had been subjected to repression and it was then that the aged Agvan Dorjiev disappeared into the Hades of Stalin's GULAG.

Notes

- 1 Zhou Weizhou. YingE qinlüe woguo Xizang shilüe. (Zou Weizhou, *The History of British Russian Aggression in our Tibet*), Xian, 1984, p. 108.
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THE CHINESE VENTURE IN K'AM, 1904-1911, AND THE ROLE OF CHAO ERH-FENG

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The K'am (*Khams*) area of Tibet borders on the Chinese province of Szechwan. Yet the two areas are separated by more than a border. The K'am-pa(s), as the inhabitants of K'am are called, are part of a culture and a way of life quite different from that of their Chinese neighbours. While the majority of Chinese have traditionally been engaged in agriculture, the K'am-pa(s), like most of their fellow Tibetans, have traditionally pursued both nomadic and agricultural ways of life. The intellectual and religious traditions of the two peoples have developed differently, as have their social and political systems. In K'am, the differences between Tibet and China are further accented by the independent nature of the K'am-pa(s). In this century, they have risen up against both Peking and Lhasa. Their differences with Lhasa though are nowhere near as basic as those with China. Whatever problems arose between K'am and the central government at Lhasa, could not negate the ties of language, culture, and a common heritage that bound all parts of Tibet. The most important tie, however, was that of religion. K'am, like the rest of Tibet, contained numerous monasteries and a sizeable number of monks.¹

In addition to the basic differences between China and Tibet, there was a general tendency for the Chinese to regard Tibetans as inferiors. Thus, most Chinese records, up until the end of the Ch'ing dynasty, refer to the K'am-pa(s) by using some of the several Chinese words that describe barbaric, uncivilised or aboriginal tribes.

In 1725, a few years after the first Ch'ing military expedition to Lhasa, the boundary between Tibet and China was fixed between the towns of Ba-t'ang (*Ba'-thang*) and Ch'ab-do (*Chab-mdo*), with boundary markers having been erected along the Ning-ching mountains.² This made approximately half of traditional K'am a part of the Chinese province of Szechwan. This change in borders, however, did not change any of the basic differences between K'am and Szechwan. For the duration of the Ch'ing dynasty, "going beyond the frontiers" (Ch. *Ch'u kuan*) to most Chinese in Szechwan, meant going west of Tachienlu or D'ar-tze-do (*Dar-rtze-mdo*),* the biggest

* Also marked by its Chinese name Kangting in some maps.

Chinese outpost in the area. Located quite close to the traditional eastern border of K'am, Tachienlu had come under Chinese rule early in the eighteenth century.

Except for those areas of K'am closest to the Chinese border, most of the areas that had become part of Szechwan, experienced little change in their social or political structures during most of the Ch'ing dynasty. Chinese officials and small garrisons were simply sent to a few of the towns in K'am, in addition to the already present local officials. The new officials did little except provide transport for Chinese passing through, and tried to keep things peaceful. The Chinese and Tibetan areas of K'am were both largely the domains of the various chieftains (Ch. *t'u-ssu*) and their subordinate headmen (Ch. *t'ou-jen*). These *t'u-ssu* owed only a very loose allegiance to the central governments of either China or Tibet, and some were out-rightly independent. In addition, no small measure of power was exerted by the various monasteries. Their huge populations³ and often huge arsenals gave them dominant positions in many areas.

To quell any large-scale violence in their area, the Chinese generally had to bring troops in from east of Tachienlu. In that the Chinese viewed K'am as a wild uncivilised area, no large garrisons were set up. The policy of leaving most affairs in the hands of the indigenous rulers was considered satisfactory. The situation remained this way until the last years of the Ch'ing dynasty, when an active policy to subdue all of K'am and sinicise it as far as possible was put into practice.

Development and related problems

In December 1903, the Provincial Governor of Szechwan, along with several others, sent a memorial to the throne which gave consideration to the situation in "the borderlands of Szechwan", i.e. K'am, and to the idea of developing that territory, particularly in terms of agriculture and mining. The idea of developing K'am was not new, but had never been implemented, largely due to the lack of Chinese control over the area. This memorial noted the difficulty of the task, K'am being mostly a cold place with few agricultural products. This problem, it was felt, could be overcome to some extent through careful planning over the years. But there was one major obstacle that the authors of the memorial worried about, and that was the reaction of the local populace to any changes that the Chinese might make in their territories. The memorial stated that: "The character of the people is quite obstinate. They make their living as nomads . . . undeveloped land is used for pasturage, it's not discarded land . . . if one area is developed, then that's one area less, for pasturage. If mines are opened in the area of the barbarians, then they will talk of geomancy (Ch. *feng-shui*) and of spirits in the mountains. They're very obstinate and simply will not budge."⁴

The memorial continued by saying, that to counter this, Chinese settlers should be brought in; certainly the K'am-pa(s) would not co-operate in such development schemes as the authors of the memorial envisioned. This step, however, would undoubtedly arouse resentment as the local people watched strangers moving in and taking over their lands.

The memorial noted this, but it was felt that the K'am-pa(s) must be made to acquiesce to Chinese plans. The memorial noted that: "It's hard to show them reason and entice them with advantages because of their arrogant nature. Military force must be used to suppress them; sternness and favours both used. Through control will come law; then benefits from the area will begin."⁵

Chinese control over their part of K'am was not secure enough for them to initiate development plans throughout the area, so it was proposed in the memorial that a first experiment in the development of mining, agriculture and commerce be attempted in Ba-t'ang. As there were already Chinese officials in residence at Ba-t'ang, and the climate there was warmer than in many other parts of K'am, it was felt to be a suitable place for this first experiment.

Early in 1904, the Szechwan Bureau of Mines sent two people to Ba-t'ang to meet and to discuss development plans with two of the Chinese officials there, Wu Hsi-chen, the Ba-t'ang Provisions Commissioner, and Wu I-chung, the Garrison Commander of Ba-t'ang. After looking into the situation, the two Ba-t'ang officials, in the spring, submitted a memorial in which they discussed the prospects for agricultural development of the land. They said that they had already obtained the assent of the local *t'u-ssu* to the idea of opening up the area for farming, but that they had run into opposition from the nearby monastery of Ting Lin. The lamas, not wanting an influx of Chinese settlers, protested that the land was only fit for pasturage and not for farming.⁶

In addition to the memorial, twelve articles were prepared as a set of proposed guidelines for land development in Ba-t'ang. The essential points were that: (a) development was to start in Ba-t'ang and expand from there. At first, one hundred Chinese settlers were to be brought in, the number to grow as development became more successful; (b) as the borderlands were lacking in numerous important items, farm tools, animals and dwellings were to be provided for the settlers; (c) funds to buy food were to be set aside, food being relatively expensive in the largely uncultivated frontier areas. Travel expenses were also to be paid to the settlers; (d) to further help develop the land, soldiers were also to be used for work in the fields. In addition to these points, it was noted that there would probably be trouble from local leaders, who were felt to be crafty and undependable. Therefore it was recommended that things be made very secure before the local people could be used in any development plans.⁷

At about this time, Feng Ch'üan, the Assistant Amban,* or Resident in Tibet (Ch. *Chu-tsang Pang-pan Ta-ch'en*), stopped in Ba-t'ang on his way to Ch'ab-do, where he was to take up residence. While there, he had an opportunity to see for himself what the area and conditions were like, and to meet with Wu Hsi-chen and Wu I-chung. Feng was quite impressed with the possibilities of agricultural development in the area, noting that the ground was particularly fertile and could be put to use for agricultural purposes.⁸ So at this time, it was decided to begin development along the lines suggested by the two Chinese officials. A small field was set aside for development and a small number of Chinese were engaged to farm it. The project was put in the hands of Wu Hsi-chen and Wu I-chung.⁹ This was the beginning of China's development of K'am.

Feng was aware of the resentment that this was going to cause, and decided to curb at least one source of opposition: the monasteries. Monastic power in almost any part of Tibet was not something to be taken lightly. The head lama (khen-po, *mkhan-po*)

* This is a Manchu derivative, designating a representative of the Manchu Emperor in Tibet. The first Amban came to Tibet in 1724 during the reign of the Seventh Dalai Lama. In 1750, an assistant Amban was instituted.

of the Ting Lin monastery had been totally unwilling to support Chinese plans, and most of the clergy were also clearly opposed. These were serious threats, so Feng proposed that there be a limit placed on the number of lamas in each monastery and that for a period of twenty years no new lamas be admitted into any monasteries.¹⁰ Feng had no sympathy whatever for the traditionally high position of the clergy in Tibetan society. "Feng felt that the lamas were tyrannical, that they harboured brigands and oppressed the people."¹¹ By limiting their numbers, he hoped to stabilise the area and check their power so that he could then proceed with the development of Ba-t'ang. Monastic power throughout Tibet, however, was too well entrenched and quite able to withstand anything Feng could do with the small number of troops he had brought with him. But Feng was an activist and would not be obstructed.

Impact of the Younghusband expedition

In August 1904, while Feng was at Ba-t'ang, the Younghusband expedition reached Lhasa, where they stayed for over a month. To enforce Tibetan compliance with treaties previously signed by Great Britain and China, a new convention was signed by British and Tibetan representatives in Lhasa. The Chinese had had as little, if not less, control, over affairs in central Tibet as they had had in eastern Tibet, and had thus been powerless to enforce any treaties in Tibet.

The result of the Younghusband expedition, for the Chinese, was to create fears about the vulnerability of their borders. If a British military expedition could reach central Tibet, it was not unthinkable that they could reach Szechwan via K'am. Whereas the south-west border of China had previously been considered safe from Europeans, it had now been disturbingly shown to be not so. The lack of Chinese control over Tibet had been made obvious, and it was felt that immediate steps were needed to remedy the situation. All of Tibet was now seen in a different light by the Ch'ing court. In the borderlands it was no longer a question of keeping local and neighbouring barbarian tribes quiet. It was now a question of shoring up defences in the face of a powerful imperialist neighbour. At the very least, that part of K'am that was under the jurisdiction of China would have to have its defences consolidated. Therefore the court decided that the area of Chan-tui or Nya-rong (*Nyag-rong*) should be placed under Chinese rule. Chan-tui, though located north-east of Ba-t'ang on the Ya-lung (*Yar-lung*) river, well east of the boundary dividing Tibetan and Chinese areas of K'am, was still ruled by a *t'u-ssu* who was under the Tibetan government and not the Ch'ing court. Several Tibetan government officials resided in Chan-tui. Orders were sent down to Hsi Liang, the viceroy of Szechwan, for the transfer of Chan-tui to China. He passed them on for execution to the Amban (Ch. *Chu-tsang Pan-shih Ta-ch'en*) at Lhasa, Yu T'ai and to Feng Ch'üan, the Assistant Amban, who was at Ba-t'ang at that time. Yu T'ai felt that the situation in Tibet was still unstable, and put off taking action. The only time he had had much power in Lhasa was when the British had arrived, their advance having sent the Dalai Lama fleeing to Mongolia. Thus he was still rather unsure of himself. Feng Ch'üan, however, was quite eager to carry out the order. He was not as fearful as Yu T'ai and wanted to take positive action in K'am.¹² Perhaps he should have been a little more wary, for the circumstances were such that although he wished to carry out the transfer of Chan-tui from Tibet to China, he would not live to do so.

Dissension and revolt

Feng's presence in Ba-t'ang had been growing more and more antagonistic to the local populace. The troops he had brought with him were newly trained and organised according to foreign military methods, not seen in the area previously. This further increased the feelings of alienation and subjugation among the K'am-pa(s) that Feng's moves had brought about. The added presence of a Catholic mission with French priests was another irritant to the Buddhist population, especially the lamas. It seemed as though Feng was sheltering a foreign doctrine, while at the same time placing restrictions on the Buddhist establishment.

When word got out that Feng was planning to evict all of the Tibetan officials from Chan-tui, things became quite serious. The Acting British Consul in Ch'engt'u noted that. "Feng Ta-jen is headstrong, and it is evident that his plans must create serious disturbances, unless the Chinese garrisons in east Tibet are strengthened."¹³

Feng was urged by the Ba-t'ang *t'u-ssu* and the head lama of the Ting Lin monastery to quickly move on across the border into Tibet, but he paid no attention.¹⁴ He was still considering plans for further land and mine development in Ba-t'ang. Oblivious to the magnitude of the dissatisfaction amongst the populace, he envisioned the development of 10,000 acres of land within three or four years.¹⁵

In the spring of 1905, open rebellion against Feng finally broke out. "Feng had completely misunderstood the power of the lamas and their support amongst the people. In spite of the faults that Feng felt existed in the clergy, they were still an organisation whose large membership was drawn from, and reflected, the different levels of Tibetan society. Most people had at least one relative in the monasteries. The populace saw threats against the clergy as threats against their own society and way of life. The head *t'u-ssu* and the assistant *t'u-ssu* of Ba-t'ang, whose authority Feng had interfered with, allied themselves with the people and the lamas. Feng had managed, through his ignorance and lack of concern for the local society, to turn everyone against him.

Beginning on the night of March 26, 1905, rioting erupted in Ba-t'ang and lasted for several days. A mob of over 500 attacked the field where the experiment in agricultural development was being undertaken. They destroyed the field and killed those who had been working the land. Troops in the area tried to quell the violence, but could not do anything. Numerous buildings were burned down and the situation rapidly deteriorated. Finally, on the night of April 2, part of a group, estimated at 3,500 or more people, razed the Catholic mission, killing two of the priests. The mob then took to the streets and attacked Feng Ch'üan's residence. In the ensuing struggle many soldiers and officials, including Wu I-chung, were killed. In the early hours of April 3, Feng made his way to the house of the head *t'u-ssu* while the people looted. Within a short while, when it became known where he had taken refuge, the people surrounded the house. On April 5, Feng managed to get out and with over 50 others tried to make his way back to Szechwan. He was ambushed in a narrow gorge not far from Ba-t'ang, however, and he and his whole party were killed.¹⁶

The Chinese reaction was to regard the uprising as just another manifestation of the barbarity of the K'am-pa(s). That they might have genuine grievances against Chinese actions did not enter into the Chinese assessment. Writing several months after the Ba-t'ang incident, the Amban in Lhasa, Yu T'ai, blamed it on the fact that

the K'am-pa(s) "... are stupid, obstinate and hard to change ... they are of a type completely violent and evil in the extreme ... they are completely without remorse for what they've done."¹⁷ Another report by a Chinese official, that wound up in the files of the British Foreign Office in London, claimed that the whole affair was the work of "lamas and aborigines."¹⁸ The British suspected that the Dalai Lama or his supporters may have had a hand in the uprising, a view supported by the reports of one of the French priests who escaped from Ba-t'ang.¹⁹ This does not seem likely, though, the Chinese having given the local residents more than enough incitement. The report of the priest may very well have been coloured by the antagonism that existed between the priests and the local lamas. The British were also quite aware of how unpopular Feng Ch'üan had become.

Having wanted to strengthen their border defences, the uprising in Ba-t'ang was the last thing the Chinese could have wished for. Their attitude regarding both the K'am-pa(s) and the border was such that they could not let Ba-t'ang slip completely from their control. The idea of such wild barbarians falling under the power of a foreign government must have been frightening. The responsibility for crushing the revolt fell to Hsi Liang, the Viceroy of Szechwan, since Ba-t'ang was then a part of that province. To accomplish this task, he chose two people. Ma Wei-ch'i, the provincial Commander-in-Chief (*T'i-tu*) and Chao Erh-feng, the Magistrate (*Tao-t'ai*) of the Chien-ch'ang circuit of Szechwan.

Chao Erh-feng's policies

From this point on, the story of the attempt to bring K'am into the political and cultural spheres of China during this period is largely a record of the work of Chao Erh-feng. He played the most important role in K'am in the few years of the Ch'ing dynasty that remained, and his actions continued to influence the course of Sino-Tibetan relations for many years after his death.

Chao was not a Manchu, but a Han Chinese. He had served in the province of Shansi as County Magistrate (*Chih-hsien*) in Ching-le and Yung-chi. After that, he held different posts in the Ho-tung area of the same province. Hsi Liang at that time was the Governor (*Hsün-fu*) of Shansi. When Hsi Liang was transferred to a post on the waterways, Chao continued to serve under him in various capacities. Subsequently Hsi Liang became Viceroy of Szechwan, and, impressed with Chao's ability, made him Magistrate of the district of Yung-ning in Szechwan. Chao distinguished himself here by personally leading his troops in quelling factional fighting involving secret societies. Over 100 offenders were executed, after which things settled down in the area. After this, Chao became Chien-ch'ang Magistrate, with headquarters in Ya-an near the K'am border.²⁰

Following the uprising, Chao was ordered to provide back-up support for Ma Wei-ch'i, who was to lead the main thrust against Ba-t'ang. In late May, Chao left Ch'engt'u for Tachienlu, where he secured supplies of rations and ammunition. He left Tachienlu for K'am on July 20, 1905. The head and assistant *t'u-ssu* of Ba-t'ang had been anticipating a strong Chinese reaction to the murder of Feng Ch'üan, as his position had been fairly high. Thus, they sent word to Hsi Liang that they had no intention of throwing off their allegiance to China, but that Feng and his reforms had antagonised the people beyond measure. They said that they would be willing to turn

over the culprits to Chinese authorities, but warned that the dispatch of troops to Ba-t'ang would lead to a general rising of all the tribes in the area.²¹ The officials were most likely trying to find a way to delay the inevitable Chinese advance. It would have been quite difficult for them to find and apprehend the culprits.

Ma Wei-ch'i arrived in Ba-t'ang in the middle of the summer, and quickly overcame local resistance. He executed the head and assistant *t'u-ssu* and had their families sent to Ch'engt'u. Chao did not accompany Ma to Ba-t'ang, but followed behind him and halted at Li-t'ang (*Li-thang*) where he stayed to hold the rear, and see that supplies were properly moved ahead to Ma. Here, Chao set the pattern for his further conduct of affairs in K'am. When the *t'ou-jen* of Li-t'ang refused to provide the necessary wu-lag (*'u-lag*) or transport service, at the urging of the head *t'u-ssu* of Li-t'ang who was the illegitimate son of the wife of the head *t'u-ssu* of Ba-t'ang, the supply line to Ba-t'ang was threatened. Chao thereupon had two *t'ou-jen* quickly executed, and placed the head *t'u-ssu* and his assistant, who was also involved in the refusal to provide wu-lag, in custody.²² With that done, supplies were able to be moved in. After Ma had been in Ba-t'ang for two months, Chao moved forward from Li-t'ang and joined him. Following Chao's arrival, several local officials and lamas, including the head lama of the Ting Lin monastery, who were deemed to have had a hand in the uprising, were executed.²³ Though Ba-t'ang was now considered to be relatively pacified, due to grain transport problems Ma decided against remaining there with his troops.²⁴ He thus withdrew to Szechwan proper, leaving Chao in K'am with the mission of cleaning out the last pockets of resistance. Though Chao was now the top Chinese official in K'am, the only places firmly under his control were Ba-t'ang and Li-t'ang. The people in other parts of K'am were aware of what had been happening in Ba-t'ang. In many areas the population was extremely hostile to the Chinese – especially since the arrival of Chinese troops in Ba-t'ang and Li-t'ang – and in some areas near Ba-t'ang, the people had gone and joined in the fighting.

Following Ma Wei-ch'i's departure, Chao was kept busy with military affairs. He launched attacks on hostile K'am-pa strongholds in the vicinity of Ba-t'ang. In November 1905, barely a month after his arrival at Ba-t'ang, fresh fighting erupted there. Chao had to send for reinforcements, which were hurriedly rushed to him from Ch'engt'u, in order to put down the trouble.²⁵ After this, he moved against Hsiang-ch'eng, a hostile area south of Li-t'ang that had formerly been subject to its *t'u-ssu*, but had declared its independence. Early in this campaign, Chao was obstructed by the areas of Tao-pa and Kung-ko-ling and was forced to attack them too. They were taken with no problems.²⁶

Hsiang-ch'eng, however, was a different matter. The Chinese had not dared to set foot in that place since 1894. In that year, a Chinese army officer from Li-t'ang and his son had been killed in Hsiang-ch'eng at the instigation of a lama there named P'u-chung Cha-wa. The usual party of Chinese troops had been sent to punish the offenders, but they were defeated and their commander was captured and flayed, his skin hung up and displayed as a warning to others.²⁷

Chao Erh-feng arrived in Hsiang-ch'eng early in 1906, leading a large force of troops trained in foreign military methods.²⁸ He fought several encounters with local forces that consisted mostly of monks. The monks finally managed to retreat in force to the monastery of Sang P'i Ling, whose walls were quite thick and made it well suited for defence. Chao was forced to surround the monastery and begin a long siege.

For several months the defenders held, but when Chao was able to locate and cut off their source of water, their situation became desperate. P'u-Chung Cha-wa hanged himself. The rest of the monks awaited reinforcements that had been requested from another monastery. However, the message asking for help had been intercepted by Chao, who, thereupon, used the ruse of having his men pretend to be the urgently needed warrior monks from the other monastery. By carrying out this deception, Chao was able to have the defenders open one of the gates to let their supposed rescuers in. When the gate was opened, Chao's troops rushed in. After fierce fighting, the monks inside surrendered. Chao was able to enter Sang P'i Ling monastery on June 19, 1906. At his orders, all of the surviving defenders were executed.²⁹

With the fall of Hsian-ch'eng, Chao's "mopping up" operation in K'am was concluded for the time being. He had carried it through with considerable vigour, and had secured a sizeable piece of territory for the beginning of development schemes beyond what Fen Ch'üan had started. He had also developed a reputation for severity that inspired hatred and fear in K'am. Opposition to Chao, however, was not very unified. During the fighting, messengers had gone out from Ba-t'ang and the neighbouring area of San-yen to other places in K'am to enlist support, stressing that the Chinese were presenting a threat to Tibetan religion, particularly the Ge-lug-pa (*dGe-lugs-pa*; Ch. *Huang-chiao*) sect. No action came of this though, as local officials feared getting involved; they claimed that the rumours of what was happening were false and refused to give any assistance to the areas involved.³⁰

As if to stress the general tension that lay between Tibetans and Chinese, in August 1905, there had also been a rising, in a Tibetan area of northern Yunnan, of "monks and barbarians."³¹ Though this could have been partly in response to the trouble in Ba-t'ang, the Chinese Viceroy there, Ting Chen-to, had, through his callousness and lack of concern for the extensive looting of his soldiers, given the Tibetans there more than enough reason for dissatisfaction. It took a large amount of military force to put the rising down.³²

Chao Erh-feng returned to Ch'engtü in November 1906. His mission was felt to have been carried out successfully and he was accordingly rewarded for his handling of the situation. Chao was awarded the *Bataru*, a Manchu military decoration, in addition to his having been given the rank of *Shih-lang* by Hsi Liang.³³ But even more significant was the fact that prior to his return, Chao had been designated Frontier Commissioner for Szechwan and Yunnan (Ch. *Ch'uan-tien Pien-wu Ta-ch'en*). This position was a new creation that reflected the changed attitude of the Ch'ing court towards the border areas near India, in the aftermath of the Younghusband expedition. K'am was now seen as an important line of defence along with the rest of Tibet.³⁴ The Chinese felt that it was most important that the area of K'am, at least, should be changed from what they regarded as a wilderness to the kind of area that could be readily accessible to them, while still presenting obstacles to any other power that tried to get a foothold there. The general idea was to develop and control the area as far along Chinese lines as possible. Chao's success in subduing the uprising in K'am recommended him for this task.

After his arrival in Ch'engtü, Chao consulted in person with Hsi Liang, and by telegraph with Ting Chen-to on the situation in the border lands, and the necessary steps to be taken there. He then submitted a memorial in which he gave a general review of the measures to be undertaken. These were: (1) appoint Chinese officials to

take over from the *t'u-ssu*, (2) train more soldiers to keep things secure, (3) bring in Chinese settlers to work the land, (4) open mines and exploit the mineral resources of the area, (5) institute commerce on a scale capable of doing away with the problems of securing and transporting goods to and from the borderlands, and (6) promote education so as to change the "barbaric customs" of the local people and make them civilised. Chao then went on to state in the memorial that it was estimated that the undertaking would cost approximately 2,000,000 *liang** of silver to begin with, and 3,000,000 *liang* during normal years to continue.³⁵

Though these plans received official sanction from the court, Chao had already begun making changes in the areas that he had taken. He had abolished the position of *t'u-ssu* in both Ba-t'ang and Li-t'ang, and had established Chinese officials there and in Hsiang-ch'eng. In these areas, the power of the remaining local officials, and of the lamas was severely curtailed. Other areas that had been under the jurisdiction of these places, such as Tao-pa and Kung-ko-ling, which had formerly been ruled by the *t'u-ssu* of Li-t'ang, were also put under Chinese officials.

In April 1906, Chao had promulgated a set of 43 regulations for Ba-t'ang.³⁶ A similar set of regulations, was also issued for Hsiang-ch'eng.³⁷ The regulations were aimed at making clear that the areas concerned were henceforth parts of China. They declared that all of the local people were subjects of the Emperor. The lamas were not to have the powers that they previously exercised, and what local officials remained, did so only within the framework of the new Chinese order. Both sets of regulations also set forth controls over various Tibetan customs including marriage, which now had to be monogamous; disposal of the dead to be done in the Chinese manner, especially in the case of parents, as an expression of the Confucian virtue of filial piety; and dress, which now had to conform to Chinese ideas of sexual morality – pants were required clothing for children, and urged for adults, to decrease the incidence of sexual misconduct. In addition, all were required to adopt Chinese surnames, the men were required to wear their hair in queues, and the people were enjoined to practise cleanliness and to construct public toilets.

Chao wanted not only to break the political power of the clergy, but also to diminish their influence amongst the people. In Ba-t'ang, he fixed limits of 300 to the number of monks allowed in each monastery.³⁸ In both areas, the only temples allowed to be built were simply to be for traditional Chinese worship and sacrifices.³⁹ In the Hsiang-ch'eng regulations, lamas were restricted from living in monastic communities. Chao further says in these regulations, "The lamas of Sang P'i Ling monastery recited the scriptures from morning till evening. How could they be killed? The Tibetan Dalai is said to be a living Buddha (Ch. *Huo Fo*). He was defeated by foreign troops (i.e. the Younghusband expedition) and fled for his life. He couldn't even protect himself. How can he protect you, and give you blessings? If you think about it, it's really pitiful!"⁴⁰

It can safely be said that Chao Erh-feng's aim was to sinicise K'am as far as possible, and in that way, make it into a secure barrier against the British and a source of profit for China. Of course, this could not be done overnight; especially if one was counting solely upon the K'am-pa (s) to speedily give up their traditional way of life,

* A tael weight in pure silver, equivalent to 1 and 1/3 ounce.

and adopt that of the Chinese. Chao therefore decided to bring Chinese settlers into the borderlands on a much larger scale than Feng Ch'üan had done. In the regulations for Ba-t'ang and Hsiang-ch'eng, Chao had provided for official assistance to anyone, Chinese or "barbarian" (man) who was willing to develop unused wasteland. On February 7, 1907, he issued a proclamation from Ch'engtü, where he still was, inviting settlement in the frontier area. The proclamation was sent out to all of the district magistrates in Szechwan, to be made known to the general population.⁴¹

This proclamation gave an exceedingly optimistic evaluation of the prospects for settlement of the frontier region. Chao told of his travels in the area, and, like Feng Ch'üan, of his realisation that there was much fertile land in the borderlands that was going to waste. The harvests of the local people were poor, Chao said, because they used crude implements; Chinese settlers, with their superior ways, would surely have better harvests.

The proclamation stated quite frankly that in former years, "These districts were under the despotic rule of the native chieftains . . . the Grain Commissaries there established, concerned themselves solely with the providing of transport and the forwarding of supplies . . . the troops stationed beyond the frontier were formerly so few in numbers that they only sufficed to fulfil the functions of courtiers and were totally inadequate to protect the people . . ." ⁴² Thus there was a great deal of insecurity in the lives of the Chinese who had lived in these areas. But, Chao continued, "Ba-t'ang, Hsiang-ch'eng and Li-t'ang now have local officials similar to those in China. Should you be involved in trouble, you need simply appeal to the Court. The natives will assuredly no longer dare to impose on the Chinese. Armed posts have been established everywhere, and death was meted out last year to a great number of thieves and robbers,⁴³ so little danger of violence is to be anticipated from these gentry."⁴⁴

Chao then went on to note the advantages of settling in K'am. The price of land in Szechwan was quite high, while in the borderlands, "Your efforts to improve the soil will be rewarded by its becoming your own property, and the only payment required of you is that of the land tax at the time of harvest."⁴⁵ In addition, settlers would be provided with travel expenses and food supplies. The requirements were just that prospective settlers have good backgrounds, be under 30, not smoke opium, and be able to provide security so that they would not turn back with the funds given them. Terms for the repayment of all sums advanced were quite fair.

It was also stressed that living beyond the frontier was rather inexpensive. Families could live more economically than in China, and single men would find that "The females moreover are industrious, and, the males lazy. A native girl taken as a wife will prove of great assistance in the work, for these women perform all the carrying of water, cooking of food, hoeing of the ground and cutting of firewood. Nor is any dowry necessary, for all that is needed is garments in which to clothe her."⁴⁶

The proclamation concluded "The over-populated state of Szechwan renders the struggle for existence very difficult. Why then do you not hasten to this promising land? . . . I have issued this proclamation . . . that you may all know and hasten thither to escape from the clutches of poverty. It is most essential that you should not doubt the integrity of my intentions but should clearly realise that this step has been taken by me out of consideration for your sorry plight."⁴⁷

As for Chao Erh-feng's true feelings regarding the situation in K'am, and the prospects for colonising and developing the region, they are probably better represented

in a memorial written by him, and dated July 20, 1907.⁴⁸ In this memorial, he elaborated on the items that he discussed in the memorial he had submitted just after his return to Ch'engt'u. In regard to all of the proposed measures to be taken in the frontier area, Chao felt there was considerable difficulty, as the region was "truly a wilderness to be opened for the first time."⁴⁹ In spite of the advantages that Chao had raised in his proclamation, most Chinese were still quite loath to move. He had to admit that the "promising land" was really not very promising to prospective settlers. The climate of the frontier regions was quite cold, and different from that in China proper. The farm implements available in K'am were crude, and of not much use to Chinese farmers. "In terms of housing, the borderlands are desolate. One can look, and it all seems boundless . . . For tens of *li** one won't see a home."⁵⁰ Housing and farmtools would therefore have to be provided for settlers. As opposed to these inconveniences, "The produce of Szechwan is not bad; the people live contentedly and don't want to move. Those who'd want to move to the borders are mostly destitute tenant farmers, without a *ts'un*† of land to themselves. If they are ordered to prepare their own farm tools and houses, then things will be most difficult to manage. It's not only farm tools and houses; outside the frontiers there aren't any stores. There are no places to buy food. When settlers first arrive, they'll need vast reserves of grains to fill their stomachs. Otherwise there will be disastrous starvation."⁵¹ Without an influx of large numbers of Chinese settlers there could be little agricultural development in K'am, and prospects for such an influx did not seem good under the conditions then prevailing.

Chao felt that there should be speedy development of commercial and mining facilities. He noted that as far as commerce was concerned, "Whatever we need for daily use in China proper, such as vegetables and cotton cloth, the border areas have never been able to purchase. There have been no merchants to transport things for them."⁵² The quick development of mining was important to Chao in that as he considered K'am to be fairly rich in mineral resources, a successful mining project could supply him with badly needed funds for the general development and administration of the frontier region.

In order to further strengthen Chinese control over K'am, Chao urged a build-up of troops in the area and a more complete Chinese administrative set-up. The central Chinese government felt that Chao could suffice with three battalions. But Chao pointed out that he had previously worked with five battalions, and that had still been quite difficult. Chao further warned that "The barbarian areas (Ch. *I ti*) that have never submitted to us are very numerous. We are restrained, while their arrogant and tyrannical practices do not diverge from the uncivilised. If we want to protect the frontiers, and we don't prepare during peaceful times, how can we ward off the enemy during a crisis?"⁵³ Chao also advocated greater consolidation of the administration of K'am, to keep the local population in the areas under his control in submission.

Another very important task, Chao felt, was the promotion of education. He regarded the K'am-pa(s) as being simple and naive to the point of following all sorts of strange doctrines that were presented to them (no doubt including Tibetan

* The Chinese mile, which is one-third of the English mile.

† Half a thumb's length, used in a metaphorical sense.

Buddhism). Thus he said that "The promotion of education seeks first to establish linguistic conformity and then to set out for them (i.e. the Tibetans) the principles of Confucianism (Ch. *Ming chiao*), to enlighten them towards China."⁵⁴ In the memorial that he had written after his consultations with Hsi Liang and Ting Chen-to, upon his return to Ch'engt'u, Chao was optimistic about opening a school in the Ba-t'ang area, saying that the idea had been well received by the people there. Now he hoped to spread schools over different parts of K'am and to use them as weapons against the influence of the Buddhist clergy.

The money that could be allocated for these steps in K'am was not very much. Of Chao's original request of 2,000,000 *liang* to begin development only 1,000,000 was granted. The financial situation in most of the other provinces, from whence these funds would come, was not very good. Chao was hopeful though, that if adequate funds were found to make a good beginning, the borderlands would soon be able to provide all of the funds needed from the profits accruing from the various enterprises there.

Chao envisioned China coming into K'am as a civilising force for the tribes of "barbarians". Thus he compared the Chinese venture in K'am with the British in Australia, the French in Madagascar, the Americans in the Philippines and the Japanese in Hokkaido. He chose these places as models to emulate, especially in bringing settlers in. In all of these areas, he noted, steps were taken to lessen the problems that settlers might have; China should also try to minimise the inconveniences, such as the lack of housing and farm tools, that settlers moving to K'am would have.

Chao's active policy in K'am, and the support of the central Chinese government for that policy, were largely due to the Chinese fear of British designs on Tibet that grew mostly out of the Younghusband expedition. In line with the new Chinese attitude towards Tibet, Yu T'ai, the Amban in Lhasa, was replaced by Lien Yü, and there was an investigation into Yu T'ai's actions in Tibet that resulted in his being sent back to China in disgrace. As his reluctance to undertake the transfer of Chan-tui to the Chinese Court indicated, Yu T'ai did not at all follow the vigorous ways of Chao Erh-feng. Chang Yin-t'ang, the new Commissioner for Tibet (Ch. *Ch'a-pan Tsang-shih Ta-ch'en*), conducted the investigation of Yu T'ai and concluded that his performance in the face of the Younghusband expedition and the obviousness of his lack of power in Tibet had brought disgrace to China. He accordingly submitted a memorial strongly condemning Yu T'ai and his subordinates.⁵⁵

Chao Erh-feng remained in Szechwan from November 1906 until October 1908, though he was not out of touch with events in K'am. In early 1907, there was an uprising in the area of Yen-ching, originally subject to the Ba-t'ang *t'u-ssu*, by monks of the Ho-hsi La Weng monastery. He telegraphed orders to his troops in K'am, and the revolt was put down.⁵⁶ Shortly afterwards, Hsi Liang was transferred out of Szechwan and Chao became Acting Viceroy of the province. He did not, however, give up his post as Frontier Commissioner, but held the two posts simultaneously. He still remained in charge of all affairs in K'am. It was during this time that most of the work of developing and changing K'am took place, within the limits of the territories that had fallen to Chao before his return to Szechwan. Ba-t'ang, Li-t'ang and Hsiang-ch'eng were all organised into Chinese counties or *hsien* with Chinese officials. Chao began setting up schools in different places under Chinese management. He also brought in several foreigners to help with certain projects: Americans investigated the possibilities of opening a gold mine in Ba-t'ang; Japanese agricultural engineers were

engaged to promote agricultural and forestry programmes; foreign engineers were employed to build a steel bridge at Ho-k'ou, between Tachienlu and Li-t'ang, and numerous other tasks were done, such as the creation of a tannery in Ba-t'ang, and the construction of rest houses along the roads of K'am.⁵⁷

The most important project, however, the movement of Chinese settlers from China proper to K'am, was a large failure. Without a substantial influx of such settlers, Chao and his troops and officials could never have a popular base of power, and would have to maintain themselves in K'am solely through military force. Of course, Chao had great hopes for his work in setting up schools, but those being educated were mainly young children, and he would have to wait quite a while before they were fully grown and indoctrinated in Chinese ways. For a two-year period following Chao's proclamation inviting settlement in K'am, a record kept of the number of settlers passing through Tachienlu on their way west, shows a monthly average of six.⁵⁸ The number of those who gave up and returned to Szechwan is not recorded. Perhaps, in spite of Chao's assurances of security, the fate of those who participated in Feng Ch'üan's experiment was still a deterrent.

Military expansion

In February 1908, Chao was chosen to be Amban for Tibet. Chao's appointment signified the intention of the Chinese government to extend its control further into central Tibet. Chao took his primary duty in his new position to be colonisation.⁵⁹ He began making preparations for an eventual trip into central Tibet, in which he hoped to proceed as far as Lhasa.⁶⁰ In August, a newspaper published by the Chinese in Lhasa, carried the following item in anticipation of Chao's arrival there. "Don't be afraid of Amban Chao and his soldiers. They are not intended to do harm to Tibetans, but to other people. If you consider, you will remember how you felt ashamed when the foreign soldiers arrived in Lhasa and oppressed you with much tyranny. We must all strengthen ourselves on this account, otherwise our religion will be destroyed in 100 or perhaps 1,000 years."⁶¹ The main fear of the Chinese was still British designs upon Tibet. The main fear of the Tibetans, however, had now become Chao Erh-feng. The news that he intended to come to Lhasa, bringing troops with him, caused considerable alarm in central Tibet. Chao's reputation for severity and his antagonism towards Tibetan Buddhism were by this time well-known. Stories of atrocities committed by his troops during 1905 and 1906 were widespread. The Tibetan government in Lhasa appealed through Lien Yü to the Ch'ing Court, asking that Chao's appointment as Amban be withdrawn. Lien Yü passed on the request, and on September 19, 1908, the Ch'ing Court ordered that an investigation be conducted into charges that Chao had "wantonly taken numerous lives, destroyed monasteries and plundered riches."⁶² The investigation had no effect on Chao's work in K'am. However, the opposition of the Tibetans and possibly of a jealous Lien Yü resulted in Chao's never assuming the post of Amban.⁶³ His name was eventually withdrawn and Lien Yü remained as the sole Amban in Lhasa until the fall of the Ch'ing dynasty.

At the same time that Chao Erh-feng had been chosen to be Amban, his elder brother, Chao Erh-hsün, had been named Viceroy of Szechwan, in a move to bring about closer co-operation between Chinese officials throughout Szechwan and Tibet.⁶⁴ In June 1908, Chao Erh-feng stepped down as Acting Viceroy of Szechwan, and his

brother took over as Viceroy of that province. The two of them consulted together, and in August they submitted a memorial which set forth their administrative reorganisation of Ba-t'ang, Li-t'ang, Hsiang-ch'eng, Tachienlu and most of the areas subject to these places. Ba-t'ang and Tachienlu were each made into *fu* or prefectures. Li-t'ang and the area of San-pa became *t'ing*, or sub-prefectures, and Tao-pa, Ho-k'ou, Kung-ko-ling and Yen-ching were made into *hsien* or counties. Hsiang-ch'eng remained a county. A magistrate was also appointed for these areas with headquarters at Ba-t'ang.⁶⁵

After his brother became Szechwan Viceroy, Chao Erh-feng no longer had to divide his time between Szechwan and K'am, and he began making preparations to return to K'am and resume his work of consolidating and expanding China's position there. After several months, he chose three battalions of troops, and on September 5, 1908, he left Ch'eng-tu heading west. He arrived at Tachienlu on October 16, and stayed there for over a month. While Chao was there, he had a stroke of good fortune, in an appeal for intervention in a succession struggle that had been going on for years between two half-brothers for the position of *t'u-ssu* of De-ge (*sDe-dge*). One of the brothers sent a messenger to Chao in Tachienlu and asked for his aid in unseating his brother, who at that time was the *t'u-ssu*. De-ge was a huge area that bordered on Ba-t'ang, Ch'ab-do and Chan-tui. Though it was located within the limits of that part of K'am that was supposed to be under Chinese influence, yet it had been unaffected by any Chinese moves in K'am since the Ba-t'ang uprising. The *t'u-ssu* of De-ge was, by virtue of the size of his realm, one of the most important local leaders in eastern Tibet, with influence throughout the area. Chao had now been given an opportunity, and sufficient excuse to send troops there and put someone he could control in the position of *t'u-ssu*, thus adding to the areas under his domination.

Chao left Tachienlu for De-ge on November 29, 1908. His march took him through areas in which there was scattered resistance, in many cases aided by Tibetan officials from Chan-tui. He arrived in De-ge on December 16, and began pacifying the area. The ousted *t'u-ssu* fled, but was able to resist Chao for over six months through numerous battles. Chan-tui provided further assistance to the K'am-pa(s) of De-ge by sending soldiers to aid them, and Chao had to dispatch one of his commanders, Fu Sung-mu, with some troops to halt them. Eventually, the ousted *t'u-ssu* was defeated, and forced to flee to central Tibet. But no sooner had Chao's claimant been made secure in the post of *t'u-ssu* than he asked, through Chao, that he be allowed to step down, and that De-ge be brought under Chinese control. He said, no doubt under heavy pressure from Chao, that "De-ge is a vast area with a sparse population. Those who spy on us are many, and ultimately I'm afraid we won't be able to protect ourselves. We are desirous of bringing Han people in to develop the land, to open it and increase the population."⁶⁶ The spectre of British intervention in Tibet is most likely meant by the reference of those spying on De-ge. Again and again, Chao cited this as a cause for strong Chinese control of all parts of Tibet.

Chao submitted a memorial noting the request of the new *t'u-ssu* and dividing De-ge and the areas subject to it into five units, on the Chinese administrative pattern. De-ge and Pai-yü were made *chou*, or counties (on a larger scale than *hsien*), T'ung-p'u and Shih-chü became *hsien*, and Teng-k'o was made a *fu*. A magistrate was also appointed for these areas, with headquarters at Teng-k'o. The *t'u-ssu*, having himself said that he was incompetent to fill his position, was removed. Eventually he

was given a salaried ceremonial post and moved with his family to Ba-t'ang.⁶⁷ To underscore Chinese intentions in De-ge, the Reform Council in Peking, in approving of these changes, stated that "The native state of De-ge should be allowed to adopt our civilisation and come under our direct rule."⁶⁸ As far as possible, De-ge and other areas were to be detached from Tibet, both politically and culturally. Throughout 1909, Chao worked on developing De-ge. He built a new road between the area and Ba-t'ang. There were still some hostile regions to his rear, such as Chan-tui, and Chao was able to by-pass them with the new road. In addition, he began using his own troops to cultivate vegetables.⁶⁹ The use of soldiers was no doubt due to the continued lack of response to his calls for Chinese settlers to come into K'am.

During 1909, the Ch'ing Court decided to withdraw Chao from the post of Amban. As was noted, he had never gone to Tibet to assume it. It was decided that Chao should deal solely with border matters while Lien Yü remained in charge of central Tibetan affairs. This was done largely to placate the Tibetan authorities in Lhasa who were opposed to Chao. Chao's headquarters were now fixed at Ba-t'ang.⁷⁰

For some time the Chinese had come to feel that if they wanted to keep their defences as secure as possible they would have to institute stronger control over central Tibet. Reliance on the Dalai Lama's government was not felt to be very effective. Chao had had some problems during 1908, in trying to get the Dalai Lama's assistance in quelling trouble in San-yen, a part of Ba-t'ang. The trouble was believed to be caused by Tibetan officials who were acting in response to events in De-ge, and it was suspected that the Dalai Lama himself may have had a hand in it. As the Dalai Lama had come to Peking in his wanderings following the Younghusband expedition, it was decided to request him to send a personal written order to those involved in the trouble in San-yen, asking that they desist. However, the Dalai Lama made excuses, and in view of the time and distance involved, it was decided to simply let Chao use troops against the Tibetans in San-yen.⁷¹ With the situation like this, the Chinese felt that without a strong military presence in Tibet, the area would be easy prey to the British. The idea of stationing a sizeable force in central Tibet became popular, and both Lien Yü and Chao Erh-hsün submitted memorials in favour of it. Lien Yü also hoped to implement the same sort of development schemes in central Tibet that Chao Er-feng had begun in K'am. The Ch'ing Court eventually approved the idea, and early in the summer of 1909 a force of 2,000 troops left Szechwan for Lhasa under the command of Chung Ying, a prefect (Ch. *Chih-fu*) of that province.⁷²

The Tibetans were strongly opposed to this dispatch of troops, and resisted them along their march. When they arrived at Ch'ab-do, inside Lhasa-controlled K'am, they found their route blocked by Tibetan troops. An urgent request was sent to Chao for assistance, and he responded with the start of a campaign that brought all of K'am into Chinese hands. Chao had only recently returned from putting down fighting in the De-ge region when he received word of Chung Ying's predicament. He quickly gathered his troops together and left De-ge for Ch'ab-do on December 4, 1909, arriving six days later. The Tibetans who were opposing the advance of Chung Ying's forces were easily dispersed by Chao, who now found himself in possession of Ch'ab-do, his first piece of territory in Lhasa-ruled K'am. He then sent part of his force with Chung as an escort to take him further into Tibet.

Chao and his reputation were well-known, and the Tibetans did not want to see him press into Tibet. Earlier, the Tibetan authorities had tried to secure a Chinese

withdrawal from parts of K'am, claiming that the Tibetan border went up to just west of Ch'engtu. This naturally brought no response from the Chinese.⁷³ Now they sent out cables to various European powers stating that "Though the Chinese and Tibetans are the same, yet nowadays the Chinese officer named Tao (sic) and the Amban Lien (sic), who resides at Lhasa are plotting together against us . . . they have brought many troops into Tibet and want to abolish our religion; so please ask the Chinese Emperor by telegram to stop the Chinese troops who are on their way."⁷⁴ The prospect of Chao coming to Lhasa was extremely frightening to the Tibetans, though in point of fact, the force that was coming was not under Chao, but had been independently raised in Szechwan to assist Lien Yü's work, and to strengthen China's position and her defences in Tibet.

After Chao was firmly in power in Ch'ab-do, it became obvious to some of the local people that he would not rest where he was but would continue by force of arms, if by no other means, to expand his domain. Bearing that in mind, and hoping to make the best of the situation, people from certain areas sent emissaries to him in Ch'ab-do' offering submission. Chao accepted such offers from the areas of Po-yul (*sPo-yul*) and Pa-su, and from the Thirty-nine Tribes. These offers sufficed for the moment, though they were not necessarily unanimous or elective in the areas concerned, as happened in Po-yul.

Chao, as expected, did not halt where he was, but continued pushing further into K'am. For the most part, his remaining time in the borderlands was taken up mostly in military campaigns. The plan to bring Chinese settlers into the area in large numbers was a failure, and thus left him without a foundation with which to continue other plans for development. Therefore Chao simply worked on expanding the amount of territory under his control, and securing it as best as possible, through the appointment of Chinese officials to the areas. Chao swept forward very quickly through eastern Tibet, taking many important regions such as Mar-k'am (*rMar-khams*) and Dza-yul (*rDza-yul*). Around late February 1910, Chao reached Gyam-da (*rGya-mda'*) which was not located in K'am, but in central Tibet, only six day's march from Lhasa.

At about the same time events in Lhasa were taking an important turn. Chung Ying had arrived there with his force of 2,000, early in February. The Dalai Lama had only recently returned from the wanderings that he had embarked on, in the aftermath, of the Younghusband expedition. During his absence, he had come to hear of what was being done by the Chinese in eastern Tibet, especially in regard to the clergy, and was naturally quite alarmed. Thus, when Chinese troops arrived in Lhasa, he once more fled; this time to India. Chao, upon hearing this news, felt that a magnificent opportunity had arrived to undertake vast changes throughout Tibet, including changes in the religion and customs of the people. The Ch'ing Court did not want to further aggravate the tension that had arisen out of the Dalai Lama's flight, and thus rejected Chao's suggestions in spite of his vigorous advocacy of them. Chao also asked that the boundary between the borderlands and central Tibet be drawn at Gyam-da, even though it was about 150 miles west of the traditional border between K'am and central Tibet that ran along the Tan-ta mountains. This idea ran into strong opposition from Lien Yü, as it obviously cut down his area of control, and was not adopted.⁷⁵

Chao turned back after reaching Gyam-da and returned with his troops to Ch'ab-do, arriving there in June 1910. He continued a hectic pace of military activities,

leaving again on July 10, to subdue Dr'ag-yab, (*Brag-g'yab*). Once done, he appointed a Commissioner (Ch. *wei-yüan*) to supervise the area. This was the way he organised administration in the areas brought under his control in this last stage of his career in K'am. A, more thorough administrative set-up was to be developed later. After Dr'ag-yab fell, Chao was forced to send troops back to Hsiang-ch'eng where a mutiny of his own forces had led to a rising of the local people there. This was put down quite severely.⁷⁶

As Chao continued his campaign, most of K'am fell or submitted to him, and before long, only some scattered areas remained outside his domain. San-yen had not been completely subdued, and had given him much trouble. In November 1910, he sent Fu Sung-mu to take the area, which he did after ten days. Again, as in other territories taken during, this time, a Commissioner was appointed to the area.

Chao took, his troops east, and in late January 1911, they arrived in Ba-t'ang, where Chao had the opportunity to test Tibetan students from the school he had established there. He must have been satisfied with the results, for he again memorialised the throne for funds with which to further local educational projects.⁷⁷ Wherever Chao went, he did not cease moving against areas that still held out against him, and Ba-t'ang was no exception. While there, he mounted an attack on Te-jung in the south, where the monks had refused to submit to him. This and other areas quickly yielded.

Then suddenly on April 21, 1911, Chao received notification that he was to be transferred from the post of Frontier Commissioner, and made Viceroy of Szechwan. His replacement in K'am was to be Wang Jen-wen, the Provincial Governor (Ch. *Fan-ssu*) of that province. Chao memorialised that the orders for his transfer be cancelled, but the Chinese government let them stand. Thereupon, he asked that Fu Sung-mu, who had served under him, be allowed to take over the post of Frontier Commissioner, and this was permitted.⁷⁸

Chao's days in K'am were now numbered; he formally handed over the office of Frontier Commissioner to Fu on May 6, but remained in K'am for another two months, working with his successor, and making some further administrative changes. He brought many of the territories that had been taken during the latter part of his career in K'am, such as Kar-dze (*dKar-mdzes*), under the management of Chinese Commissioners. He also continued his military actions against areas that had still not submitted. He sent troops to subdue Po-yul, from where he had previously, in Ch'engtu, received emissaries, who claimed that the people of the area were not Tibetans, but rather the descendants of Chinese soldiers who had been sent to the frontiers generations ago, and had settled there. They produced clothing, food and various other items to back up their claim. Furthermore, they stressed that their territory needed the protection of China, as they were close to the border of India. Lien Yü sent Chung Ying's troops to occupy the area, but they were driven off; it seems not all of the inhabitants belonged to the group that had sent the emissaries. It took a large number of Chao's (now Fu's) troops to take the ostensibly submissive region of Po-yul.⁷⁹

The one major area that remained to be taken was Chan-tui, the area whose transfer from Tibetan to Chinese administration had been planned years before by Feng Ch'üan. Through the years, it had simply not happened, and even in 1911 there were still Tibetan government officials there. Much trouble had been instigated by these officials in neighbouring areas, Chao felt. By this time, however, Chan-tui was

surrounded by regions that had submitted, and was not very strong. As it lay on Chao's route, he was able to make a quick attack on it as he returned to China in July. Within a few days, the Tibetan officials had fled and Chan-tul was his.⁸⁰

On July 17, Chao left the frontier region and returned to Szechwan. During his time in K'am, most of the area had been brought under Chinese administration, though there were still broad feelings of antagonism between the Tibetans who lived there and the Chinese who ruled. This was due to the failure of Chao's colonisation schemes, which led to Chinese reliance on a policy in which force was the main instrument of control. This policy was continued by Fu Sung-mu for the brief time that he served as Frontier Commissioner, and he maintained a large garrison in K'am to patrol the area, putting down opposition when it occurred.

Fu Sung-mu's most significant act as Frontier Commissioner was to memorialise that K'am should be converted into a Chinese province under the name Sikang. The borders that he proposed stretched from Szechwan up to the Tan-ta mountains.⁸¹ As most of the area had been organised into Chinese administrative units it was only a small step to convert it into a province.

The idea was not adopted, however, as revolution and chaos swept through China shortly after Fu submitted his memorial. In October revolutionaries rose in revolt at Wu-han in China, and soon Manchu authority vanished. What resulted was utter disorder as far as K'am was concerned. Fu was ordered by revolutionary partisans to give up his post, and he did so, returning to Ch'engtu. No one was sent to replace him, however, and the resulting power vacuum brought an end to much of what Chao Erh-feng had done. Before long, the Chinese troops in K'am, like those in central Tibet, mutinied, which made it quite easy for Tibetan troops and officials to move back into the area. The Tibetans soon pushed the Chinese back beyond the Dri-ch'u (*Bri-chu*) (Ch. *Chin-sha*)* river. A hastily raised force from Szechwan, under the Military Governor (Ch. *Tu-tu*) of that province had little effect on the situation. Eventually the river came to be the *de facto* boundary between China and Tibet, although there was quite a lot of seesawing back and forth over the years as trouble would flare up between the armies stationed in the area. China continued to claim all of the territory up to Gyam-da as hers. In 1939, the Chinese government finally declared the establishment of the province of Sikang, but by this time half of the area proposed for the province was not under Chinese rule.⁸²

That part of K'am that was left under Chinese control saw a rapid decline in development in the years following Chao's departure. After the Chinese revolution, the constant changing of officials in the area halted progress, and these officials, through their greed and mismanagement wrecked the enterprises that Chao had begun. By 1916, an American missionary travelling in K'am was able to state that the whole project of development there had become a failure.⁸³

Chao Erh-feng in retrospect

Chao Erh-feng did not fare any better than his schemes. Following his return to Ch'engtu, he had to put down disturbances resulting from the nationalisation of the

* Known today as the Yangtse.

Szechwan-Hankow railroad. In doing so, a large number of people were killed and wounded and Chao was blamed for this. When the Ch'ing dynasty collapsed, the troops in Ch'engt'u rebelled and Chao was left with no authority. He was at the mercy of the chaotic forces that controlled the city, and his handling of the railroad affair had given many a desire for vengeance. The self-proclaimed Military Governor of Szechwan, Yin Ch'ang-heng, attacked the Viceroy's residence and captured Chao. He was led to the provincial examination hall, where, cursing his captors, he was executed.⁸⁴

It is generally recognised that Chao was very harsh in his administration of K'am. For this reason, Chinese writers generally do not pay much attention to him in writing about Tibet, other than noting which areas he brought under Chinese administration, that being considered his biggest achievement. A book published in Taiwan notes in passing, that "It's a pity that he (Chao) placed undue emphasis on military force and handled things too violently. He was unable to deeply understand the mentality, religion, customs or habits of the Tibetans or K'am-pa(s).⁸⁵ Mainland publications, if they mention Chao at all, simply say that he was an advocate of "Great Manchuism" (Ch. *Ta Man-tsu Chu-i*), the Ch'ing policy of regarding all non-Manchus as inferiors.⁸⁶ Chao is generally considered to be an embarrassment to the Chinese, as the question of Sino-Tibetan relations is still very sensitive. In contrast, the Younghusband expedition gets much Chinese attention as an example of imperialist designs on Tibet.

As to the Tibetan opinion of Chao, an official Tibetan document from the Simla Conference of 1913-1914 states that "Chao Erh-feng is well-known to everybody as a most unscrupulous adventurer whose acts cannot be justified or condoned . . . Chao Erh-feng, out of mere thirst for blood, attacked and demolished the Chartin (Ch. *Hsien-cheng*) (sic) and other Buddhist monasteries and many other places and butchered many innocent men, both high and low. He destroyed several temples and villages by setting fire to them without any provocation, massacred many hundreds of lamas and lay people. He plundered gold, silver, and rare bronze images and many other priceless treasures and relics. He cast the bronze and copper offering vessels of worship into bullets and small coins. And most sacrilegious of all acts of vandalism was that he had paper soles of shoes made out of the leaves of the sacred Buddhist scriptures . . ."⁸⁷

Chao's antagonism to Buddhism, and the severity with which he carried out the occupation of many parts of K'am made it quite possible for him to have done at least some of the things of which he is accused. However, a more balanced view of him is given by Eric Teichman: "Though he was known to the Szechuanese by the nickname 'Butcher Chao' owing to his alleged tendency towards wholesale executions, and though his proceedings were doubtless at times characterised by great severity towards the unfortunate Tibetans who objected to submitting to the Chinese yoke, his reputation was nevertheless that of a just man; and, while he did not hesitate to behead a recalcitrant Tibetan chief or headman, he was equally ready to decapitate offenders amongst his own officers and men . . . Chao Erh-feng's justice and fair dealings are remembered today in eastern Tibet as well as his severity . . . amongst the lamas, however, his name is universally execrated as the arch enemy, the destroyer of monasteries and killer of monks."⁸⁸

The legacy that Chao would have liked to have left behind in K'am, that of extensive colonisation and agricultural, mineral and educational development, was

unrealisable during and after his lifetime, due to the unwillingness of both Chinese and Tibetans to take part in it. The legacy that he did leave was one of discord; the extent of his march into Tibet resulted in China laying claim to all territory up to Gyam-da. The Simla Conference tried to define the status of Tibet vis-a-vis China and India, but floundered solely on the question of where the boundary between China and Tibet was to be drawn. Thus, Chao's actions led to China's refusal to enter into a written agreement on the status of Tibet, and the absence of any such agreement between China and Tibet eventually resulted in China's occupation of Tibet by force in 1951.

Notes

- 1 With reference to the strength of the religious ties between K'am and central Tibet, it is entirely possible that the revolt in K'am of Tobgyal Pangdatsang in 1934 would not have eventuated if the Dalai Lama had not died in 1933. The idea of fighting against a reigning Dalai Lama does not sit well with most Tibetans. For details on the rising, see Tsipon W. D. Shakabpa, *Tibet: A Political History*, pp. 277-78.
- 2 Mei Hsin-ju, *Hsi-k'ang*, p. 48.
- 3 *Ibid.*, pp. 142-55. The author travelled in K'am in 1932, and was able to ascertain the monastic population in six out of 31 areas into which the Chinese divided the region. In these six areas alone, the monks numbered over 20,000.
- 4 *Ibid.*, pp. 213-14. { . . . }
- 5 *Ibid.*, p. 214.
- 6 *Ibid.*, p. 215.
- 7 *Ibid.*, pp. 215-17.
- 8 *Ch'ing Shih Kao*, vol. 126, *t'u-ssu* 2, p. 18. Fu Sung-mu, *Hsi-k'ang Chien Sheng Chi*, p. 4.
- 9 Mei, p. 278.
- 10 Eric Teichman, *Travels of a Consular Officer in Eastern Tibet*, p. 20. Sir Francis Young-husband, *India and Tibet*, p. 369. *Further Papers Relating to Tibet* (Cd. 5240), (hereafter cited as *Papers*), No. 24, p. 18.
- 11 Wu Feng-p'ei, ed., *Ch'ing-chi Ch'ou Tsang Tsou-tu*, *You Tai* 2, p. 3.
- 12 Mei, p. 70; Fu, p. 4.
- 13 *Papers*, No. 12, p. 13.
- 14 *Ch'ing Shih Kao*, ch. 126, *t'u-ssu* 2, p. 18; Fu, p. 4.
- 15 *Papers*, No. 12, p. 13.
- 16 *Ibid.*, No. 23, p. 17; Wu, *You Tai* 2, pp. 4-5; *Ch'ing Shih Kao*, vol. 126, *t'u-ssu* 2, p. 18; Fu, p. 4. The last three sources note that Feng left the head *t'u-ssu*'s house under truce. The first source tells an interesting story of Feng escaping by throwing rupees at the crowd around the house; in their haste to get at the money, the mob let Feng dash through their ranks.
- 17 Wu, *You Tai* 2, pp. 21-2.
- 18 *Papers*, No. 23, p. 17.
- 19 *Ibid.*, No. 25, p. 19; No. 11, p. 12.
- 20 *Ch'ing Shih Kao*, vol. 111, p. 3. The chief compiler of this work was Chao Erh-feng's elder brother, Chao Erh-hsün, who later became Viceroy of Szechwan. Nevertheless, the treatment of Chao in this history does not seem to be unduly sympathetic to him because of this fact.
- 21 *Papers*, No. 18, p. 15; No. 22, p. 16.
- 22 *Ch'ing Shih Kao*, vol. 126, *t'u-ssu* 2, p. 17; Hu Chi-lu, *Hsi-k'ang Chiang-yü Su Ku Lu*, p. 6. The head *t'u-ssu* eventually escaped to Tao-pa, Kung-ko-ling, and ultimately central Tibet.
- 23 *Ch'ing Shih Kao*, vol. 126, *t'u-ssu* 2, p. 5; Hsieh Pin. *Hsi-tsang Wen-t'i*, p. 42.
- 24 Hsieh, p. 42.
- 25 *Papers*, No. 45, p. 30.
- 26 *Ch'ing Shih Kao*, vol. 126, *t'u-ssu* 2, p. 17. On fleeing to Tao-pa, and Kung-ko-ling, the head *t'u-ssu* of Li-t'ang encouraged these areas to resist the Chinese advance.

- 27 *Ch'ing Shih Kao*, vol. 126, *t'u-ssu* 2, p. 17; Mei, p. 316; Hsieh, p. 44; Fu, p. 6; Younghusband, pp. 371-2.
- 28 Younghusband, p. 371; Teichman, p. 21. Younghusband says that Chao took 2,000 soldiers, Teichman says 3,000.
- 29 *Ch'ing Shih Kao*, vol. 126, *t'u-ssu* 2, p. 17; *Papers*, No. 229, pp. 144-5.
- 30 Wu, *Yu Tai* 2, p. 22.
- 31 *Shih Erh Ch'ao Tung Hua ju*, vol. 30, p. 5463.
- 32 *Ibid.*, vol. 30, p. 5463; *Papers*, No. 229, p. 145.
- 33 *Ch'ing Shih Kao*, vol. 111, p. 3; *Papers*, No. 229, p. 45.
- 34 T'iao Hsi-kuang, *Ch'ou Tsang Ch'u-i*, pp. 25-9.
- 35 *Ibid.*, pp. 25-9 contains the text of the memorial.
- 36 *Papers*, No. 159, pp. 83-9 contains the text of the Ba-t'ang regulations in English.
- 37 T'a Tao-nan, *Pien-chiang Cheng-chih Chih-tu Shih*, pp. 191-9.
- 38 *Papers*, No. 159, p. 99.
- 39 *Ibid.*, No. 159, p. 99; T'ao, p. 195.
- 40 T'ao, p. 196.
- 41 *Papers*, No. 182, pp. 108-10 contains the text of the proclamation in English.
- 42 *Ibid.*, No. 182, p. 109.
- 43 It has always been general practice for Chinese government authorities to refer to those who defy or oppose them as bandits and robbers, regardless of the political motivations involved. One need only read propaganda currently put out in the People's Republic of China and in Taiwan, to see that each side still uses the same terms to refer to the other.
- 44 *Papers*, No. 182, p. 109.
- 45 *Ibid.*
- 46 *Ibid.*, No. 182, p. 110.
- 47 *Ibid.*
- 48 *Shih Erh Ch'ao Tung Hua Lu*, vol. 30, pp. 5677-80, contains the text of the memorial.
- 49 *Ibid.*, p. 5678.
- 50 *Ibid.*
- 51 *Ibid.*
- 52 *Ibid.* A contrary opinion with regard to trade in Kam is voiced by W. M. Rockhill in *The Land of the Lamas*. On pp. 281-2, he notes a considerable variety of items that pass from Tachienlu into Tibet. His observations are the result of a journey through Am-do (A-mdo) and K'am in 1888 and 1889.
- 53 *Ibid.*, p. 5679.
- 54 *Ibid.*
- 55 *Ch'ing Shih Kao*, vol. 129, *fan pu* 8, p. 23. Wu, *Chang-Yin-t'ang* 2, pp. 17-20.
- 56 *Ch'ing Shih Kao*, vol. 129, *fan pu* 8, p. 21; Hsieh, p. 37.
- 57 Hsieh, p. 37; Fu, p. 21.
- 58 Mei, pp. 214-6.
- 59 *Ch'ing Shih Kao*, vol. 111, p. 4.
- 60 *Papers*, No. 254, p. 161.
- 61 *Ibid.*, No. 284, p. 178.
- 62 *Ta Ch'ing Li Ch'ao Shih Lu, Te Tsung Ch'ao*, vol. 11, 34th year, 8th month, pp. 11-2.
- 63 T'ao, p. 189. Lien Yü was extremely jealous of anyone who seemed to encroach on his authority. This is quite obvious from his later intrigues against the commander of the Chinese army in Tibet, after the collapse of the Ch'ing dynasty. As for his relationship with Chao, the imperial orders were that Chao was not to replace Lien, but to work with him. Thus there were to be two Ambans. Even so, Lien remained jealous of Chao.
- 64 *Shih Erh Ch'ao Tung Hua Lu*, vol. 30, p. 5839.
- 65 During this and subsequent administrative changes, new Chinese names were often given to the reorganised, areas. Thus Ba-t'ang, in Wade-Giles romanisation changed from Pa-t'ang to Pa-an, and Li-t'ang likewise changed from Li-t'ang to Li-hua. These new names were not necessarily permanent; as a glance at a recent map of the People's Republic of China will show.
- 66 *Ch'ing Shih Kao*, vol. 126, *t'u-ssu* 2, p. 16.

- 67 *Ibid.*, vol. 126, *t'u-ssu* 2, pp. 15-6; Hsieh, pp. 87-8; Hu, p. 30; *Papers*, No. 297, p. 185; Teichman, pp. 24-5; Younghusband, pp. 374-75. All contain accounts of the submission of De-g'e to Chao.
- 68 *Papers*, No. 310, p. 193; Younghusband, p. 375.
- 69 *Papers*, No. 297, p. 186.
- 70 *Ch'ing Shih Kao*, vol. 111, p. 4. Chao had originally asked that his appointment as Amban be withdrawn so that he could concentrate on matters in K'am. The Court let the appointment stand until it became obvious that there was much opposition to Chao in Tibet. This source simply notes that in 1909, the Court adopted Chao's suggestion, and he was relieved of duties as Amban and left solely in charge of border matters.
- 71 *Ibid.*, vol. 129, *fan pu* 8, p. 24.
- 72 *Ibid.*, vol. 129, *fan pu* 8, pp. 24-5; Cheng Shih-tun, *Ch'ing-mo Min-ch'u Wai-jen Ch'in Wo Hsi-tsang Shih*, pp. 56-7.
- 73 Teichman, p. 26.
- 74 *Papers*, No. 297, p. 187.
- 75 Teichman, p. 30.
- 76 *Ibid.*
- 77 Hsieh, p. 39.
- 78 *Ibid.*
- 79 *Ibid.*, p. 64 *Ch'ing Shih Kao*, vol. 111, p. 5; Hu, p. 20.
- 80 *Ch'ing Shih Kao*, vol. 111, p. 5; Hsieh, pp. 39-40. Chinese sources note that Chao was welcomed by the people who were glad to be rid of the Tibetan officials. While it is true that officials from central Tibet often abused their positions and were resented by many K'am-pa(s), it still seems unlikely that Chao, with his reputation for severity and antagonism towards the Tibetan culture, could have received any sort of genuine welcome.
- 81 Chang Ch'i-yun, ed., *Ch'ing Shih*, vol. 7, p. 5726.
- 82 T'ao, pp. 199-200.
- 83 Mei, p. 10.
- 84 *Ch'ing Shih Kao*, vol. 111, pp. 5-6.
- 85 T'ao, p. 190.
- 86 Huang Fen-sheng, *Hsi-tsang Ch'ing-k'uang*, p. 113.
- 87 *The Boundary Question Between China and Tibet*, p. 47.
- 88 Teichman, p. 37.

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THE SOLDIER

Louis Magrath King

Source: L. M. King, *China in Turmoil: Studies in Personality*, London: Heath Cranton, 1927, pp. 58–65.

He had enlisted at the age of eighteen in the old days, a brief dozen years ago, when no very noticeable prestige attached to the status of a private Chinese soldier. Followed a decade packed with campaigning on the roof of the world. The sun and wind of Tibet had dried the sap of youth out of his face, and left it like an old leather glove. A Tibetan sword had slashed across it, giving him a scar which was but one of the lines in a face scarred with experience and privation. And he limped, another old wound. His fate had caught him up, tossed him hither and thither, and finally left him derelict on the wrong side of the frontier. And there I met him.

It was all a question of high politics, the relations of China and Tibet, and he and his fellows but pawns of no individual importance, soldiers of the Chung Ying expedition to Lhasa of 1909–10. Nothing happened until the expedition, some 1,500 men in all, had been nearly five months on the road. Then they met the first barrier. It was unpleasant. They had not expected armed opposition on the road. Travel in Tibet is strenuous enough under the most favourable circumstances; and if you are short of supplies, transport, proper clothing, and so on, it becomes, especially in winter, a life-and-death affair. The barrier was swept aside with considerable slaughter. So was the next a few days further on. A question of armament. The Chinese, with rifles, were opposed by men armed with swords and matchlocks.

The expedition found no more barriers, and reached Lhasa in the middle of the New Year festivities, when the holy city is very crowded indeed. The Chinese, though their entry was unopposed, were not comfortable; so few of them, however relatively well-armed, in a city of thousands. They fired into the air. Not bravado, but a bluff to conceal weakness. "We were scared and hoped to scare them," said our corporal, for such he was by then. Unfortunately some of the shots struck the Potala, the palace of His Holiness the Dalai Lama, the ruler of Tibet, who left the same night for India. Such was the sequence of events according to the corporal. This was not at all what Chinese statesmanship desired. They wanted the Dalai Lama to "tremble and obey," not go away. The Imperial Resident's luck was clearly out. He hadn't fired the shots, yet he must henceforth make bricks with very little straw.

Peace reigned for a year or two at Lhasa, but there was no peace for our corporal. Off he was sent on an expedition to open up a more direct line of communication with the frontier, an endeavour which aroused the armed hostility of the Tibetans of the regions concerned. The campaign lasted four months, and the small expedition, being

totally inadequate to its purpose, achieved nothing but automobility, like a stout ship ploughing through angry seas. The engagements were mostly of the barrier kind. The Tibetans would erect a wall of loose stones across the road, and the Chinese would dislodge them by rifle-fire. Occasionally, however, the Tibetans would descend upon the expedition with their heavy swords, and endeavour to wipe it out once for all. It was in one of these rushes that the corporal got his sword scar.

Then came the Chinese Revolution, and the Imperial troops at Lhasa, sick of exile and with their pay in arrears, decided to revolt in sympathy. There was nobody in particular to revolt against, except perhaps the unfortunate Resident, whose luck was again in abeyance. But the troops construed Revolution in the sense that you might do a little looting. They first looted their civilian compatriots at the Tibetan capital, and then turned their attention to the Tibetans themselves. The latter, however, were by no means so helpless. They took to arms, and the Chinese were soon in dire straits, from which they were finally extricated by diplomatic intervention, and repatriated through India.

Our corporal, however, was at the time in garrison, with a hundred or so of his fellows, in a small hamlet some days' journey from Lhasa. They tried to make their way to the capital, but the roads were again blocked, and they were not in sufficient strength to force the new barriers. They were successfully held up at a barrier six days' journey from Lhasa; here they lost their commander and nine men. They retreated in the direction of China, and met further barriers. A stretch of inhospitable country which would take a well-equipped traveller a month to cross lay between them and the nearest Chinese garrison on the frontier, and that garrison was itself sustaining a siege.

The chances of our corporal and his comrades ever getting through to safety anywhere were nil. They, however, fought their way along sturdily. An organized effort would, of course, have destroyed them without difficulty; but, luckily for them, it was all guerilla warfare, each hamlet making its own local effort to wipe them out. At one place thirty of them got separated from their fellows, and cut their way back with the loss of twelve of their number. A little farther on they were held up six months, beleaguered in a small hamlet; they might have held out there indefinitely, had not the besiegers got between them and their water-supply; after three days of that, they cut their way out in a surprise rush, losing ten of their number. At another place twenty of the party got cut off, and were never seen again. Finally, over a year after they had set forth, the party, now numbering but thirty-five men, reached the frontier garrison, and found it just relieved by fresh troops from China.

You would think that our corporal would now be granted a long period of home leave – *otium cum dignitate*, hero and veteran – in his native village. Not a bit of it. He was promptly detailed off to an outlying garrison, and was soon fighting again. On one occasion the Chinese were endeavouring to dislodge half a company of Tibetan troops from a fort they had taken. They couldn't starve them out or drive them out by rifle-fire. So the Chinese commander called for volunteers to burn them out. Our corporal was one of them. I asked him why he volunteered; surely he had had his fill of fighting? He said he had got used to it, and anyway there was a reward of twenty rupees per man. I expect this was merely self-depreciatory. Probably he had been through so much that he didn't care what risks he took. They crept up to the walls, fixed the faggots, and soon had the fort in a blaze; the garrison burst out and were killed to a man.

Soon came a period of peace on the frontier, whilst diplomats in far-away comfortable places argued the whys and wherefores of this and that, and endeavoured to arrange a settlement. Three years passed, with our corporal still in garrison. Then came the renewal of hostilities, resulting in the Tibetan wave which swamped the frontier. The outlying garrisons were driven in to frontier headquarters, which fell, surrendered, after a long and stout defence. The Tibetans had learnt the lesson of the British and Chinese expeditions of 1908-4 and 1909-10 respectively. Swords and matchlocks and militia no longer, but organized troops with modern rifles. It looked like a choice between surrender and annihilation. Nevertheless the corporal said the majority of the garrison were opposed to surrendering. And I can believe it, if they were of the same calibre as our corporal. Men of his type just peg along sturdily without much thought or fear or hope. He had been in worse places, and had come out with his life and his rifle. And the General himself was another old frontier stalwart; indeed, he executed his second-in-command a few days earlier for advocating surrender.

“Then why did you surrender?” I asked the corporal.

“Our officers said we would all get three months’ pay and be allowed to go home in peace.” That was probably it. The old frontiersmen did not believe in such promises, and were used to tight places; but there were many newcomers amongst them, and their hopes and fears must have carried the day. They gave up their rifles, did not get the three months’ pay, but were duly repatriated, via Lhasa and India. The old stalwarts were indignant; they talked of taking it out of their General, of refusing to go home, of folding their arms and dying if need be where they were; but this phase passed off, and they submitted, as we all do, to *force majeure*.

So our corporal once more on the old, old road, toiling painfully over the same old passes. His wounded foot gave out at the very place where, eight years before, his expedition had met, and swept aside, the first barrier. There he rested, in penury of course, half a year. When he was fit to walk again he was too late for repatriation via India. They had all gone long since. Back again, a month’s journey, to the old frontier headquarters, still in Tibetan hands, and another half-year there, perforce on charity, waiting till something turned up.

It fell to me to be that something. And so a few days later our corporal bade his farewell, he and a comrade in like plight. Two Tibetan girls came to see them off, and it was a sad parting. No doubt it was these women who had really kept them alive. Womanhood, out of love born of pity, belying the harshness of the world to man in distress. One would have thought our corporal beyond the weakness of tears, but he wasn’t. He broke down, mounted hurriedly, dug his heels into his pony, and galloped off. In front of him, a month ahead, China; behind, a Tibetan girl in tears.

Long afterwards I heard of him again. He had re-enlisted.

THE 1914 SIMLA CONVENTION BETWEEN GREAT BRITAIN, CHINA, AND TIBET, AND ATTACHED TRADE REGULATIONS

Source: H. E. Richardson, *Tibet and its History*, London/Boston: Shambala, 1984, pp. 283–90. Reprinted by permission of the Tibetan Government-in-exile.

His Majesty the King of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland and of the British Dominions beyond the Seas, Emperor of India, His Excellency the President of the Republic of China, and His Holiness the Dalai Lama of Tibet, being sincerely desirous to settle by mutual agreement various questions concerning the interests of their several States on the Continent of Asia, and further to regulate the relations of their several Governments, have resolved to conclude a Convention on this subject and have nominated for this purpose their respective Plenipotentiaries, that is to say: His Majesty the King of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland and of the British Dominions beyond the Seas, Emperor of India, Sir Arthur Henry McMahon, Knight Grand Cross of the Royal Victorian Order, Knight Commander of the Most Eminent Order of the Indian Empire, Companion of the Most Exalted Order of the Star of India, Secretary to the Government of India, Foreign and Political Department;

His Excellency the President of the Republic of China, Monsieur Ivan Chen, Officer of the Order of the Chia Ho;

His Holiness the Dalai Lama of Tibet, Lönchen Ga-den Shatra Pal-jor Dorje; who having communicated to each other their respective full powers and finding them to be in good and due form have agreed upon and concluded the following Convention in eleven Articles:—

ARTICLE 1

The Conventions specified in the Schedule to the present Convention shall, except in so far as they may have been modified by, or may be inconsistent with or repugnant to, any of the provisions of the present Convention, continue to be binding upon the High Contracting Parties.

ARTICLE 2

The Governments of Great Britain and China recognising that Tibet is under the suzerainty of China, and recognising also the autonomy of Outer Tibet, engage to respect the territorial integrity of the country, and to abstain from interference in the

administration of Outer Tibet (including the selection and installation of the Dalai Lama), which shall remain in the hands of the Tibetan Government at Lhasa. The Government of China engages not to convert Tibet into a Chinese province. The Government of Great Britain engages not to annex Tibet or any portion of it.

ARTICLE 3

Recognising the special interest of Great Britain, in virtue of the geographical position of Tibet, in the existence of an effective Tibetan Government, and in the maintenance of peace and order in the neighbourhood of the frontiers of India and adjoining States, the Government of China engages, except as provided in Article 4 of this Convention, not to send troops into Outer Tibet, nor to station civil or military officers, nor to establish Chinese colonies in the country. Should any such troops or officials remain in Outer Tibet at the date of the signature of this Convention, they shall be withdrawn within a period not exceeding three months.

The Government of Great Britain engages not to station military or civil officers in Tibet (except as provided in the Convention of September 7, 1904, between Great Britain and Tibet) nor troops (except the Agents' escorts), nor to establish colonies in that country.

ARTICLE 4

The foregoing Article shall not be held to preclude the continuance of the arrangement by which, in the past, a Chinese high official with suitable escort has been maintained at Lhasa, but it is hereby provided that the said escort shall in no circumstances exceed 300 men.

ARTICLE 5

The Governments of China and Tibet engage that they will not enter into any negotiations or agreements regarding Tibet with one another, or with any other Power, excepting such negotiations and agreements between Great Britain and Tibet as are provided for by the Convention of September 7, 1904, between Great Britain and Tibet and the Convention of April 27, 1906, between Great Britain and China.

ARTICLE 6

Article III of the Convention of April 27, 1906, between Great Britain and China is hereby cancelled, and it is understood that in Article IX(d) of the Convention of September 7, 1904, between Great Britain and Tibet the term 'Foreign Power' does not include China.

Not less favourable treatment shall be accorded to British commerce than to the commerce of China or the most favoured nation.

ARTICLE 7

(a) The Tibet Trade Regulations of 1893 and 1908 are hereby cancelled.

(b) The Tibetan Government engages to negotiate with the British Government new Trade Regulations for Outer Tibet to give effect to Articles II, IV and V of the Convention of September 7, 1904, between Great Britain and Tibet without delay; provided always that such Regulations shall in no way modify the present Convention except with the consent of the Chinese Government.

ARTICLE 8

The British Agent who resides at Gyantse may visit Lhasa with his escort whenever it is necessary to consult with the Tibetan Government regarding matters arising out of the Convention of September 7, 1904, between Great Britain and Tibet, which it has been found impossible to settle at Gyantse by correspondence or otherwise.

ARTICLE 9

For the purpose of the present Convention the borders of Tibet, and the boundary between Outer and Inner Tibet, shall be as shown in red and blue respectively on the map attached hereto.

Nothing in the present Convention shall be held to prejudice the existing rights of the Tibetan Government in Inner Tibet, which include the power to select and appoint the high priests of monasteries and to retain full control in all matters affecting religious institutions.

ARTICLE 10

The English, Chinese and Tibetan texts of the present Convention have been carefully examined and found to correspond, but in the event of there being any difference of meaning between them the English text shall be authoritative.

ARTICLE 11

The present Convention will take effect from the date of signature.

In token whereof the respective Plenipotentiaries have signed and sealed this Convention, three copies in English, three in Chinese and three in Tibetan.

Done at Simla this third day of July, AD, one thousand nine hundred and fourteen, corresponding with the Chinese date, the third day of the seventh month of the third year of the Republic, and the Tibetan date, the tenth day of the fifth month of the Wood-Tiger year.

Initial of the Lönchen Shatra. (Initialled) A.H.M. [Owing to the impossibility of writing initials in Tibetan, the mark of the Lönchen at this place is his signature.]

Seal of the Lönchen Shatra. Seal of the British Plenipotentiary.

Schedule

1. Convention between Great Britain and China relating to Sikkim and Tibet, signed at Calcutta the 17th March 1890.
2. Convention between Great Britain and Tibet, signed at Lhasa the 7th September 1904.
3. Convention between Great Britain and China respecting Tibet, signed at Peking the 27th April 1906.

The notes exchanged are to the following effect:—

1. It is understood by the High Contracting Parties that Tibet forms part of Chinese territory.
2. After the selection and installation of the Dalai Lama by the Tibetan Government, the latter will notify the installation to the Chinese Government whose representative

at Lhasa will then formally communicate to His Holiness the titles consistent with his dignity, which have been conferred by the Chinese Government.

3. It is also understood that the selection and appointment of all officers in Outer Tibet will rest with the Tibetan Government.

4. Outer Tibet shall not be represented in the Chinese Parliament or in any other similar body.

5. It is understood that the escorts attached to the British Trade Agencies in Tibet shall not exceed seventy-five per centum of the escort of the Chinese Representative at Lhasa.

6. The Government of China is hereby released from its engagements under Article III of the Convention of March 17, 1890, between Great Britain and China to prevent acts of aggression from the Tibetan side of the Tibet—Sikkim frontier.

7. The Chinese high official referred to in Article 4 will be free to enter Tibet as soon as the terms of Article 3 have been fulfilled to the satisfaction of representatives of the three signatories to this Convention, who will investigate and report without delay.

Initial of the Lönchen Shatra. (Initialled) A.H.M.

Seal of the Lönchen Shatra. Seal of the British Plenipotentiary.

On the withdrawal of the Chinese, a Declaration was signed by the plenipotentiaries of Britain and Tibet declaring that the Convention was to be binding on the Governments of Britain and Tibet and agreeing that so long as the Chinese Government withheld its signature it would be debarred from the enjoyment of privileges accruing thereunder.

Anglo-Tibetan Trade Regulations—3rd of July 1914

Whereas by Article 7 of the Convention concluded between the Governments of Great Britain, China and Tibet on the third day of July, AD 1914, the Trade Regulations of 1893 and 1908 were cancelled and the Tibetan Government engaged to negotiate with the British Government new Trade Regulations for Outer Tibet to give effect to Articles II, IV and V of the Convention of 1904;

His Majesty the King of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland, and of the British Dominions beyond the Seas, Emperor of India, and His Holiness the Dalai Lama of Tibet have for this purpose named as their Plenipotentiaries, that is to say: His Majesty the King of Great Britain and Ireland and of the British Dominions beyond the Seas, Emperor of India, Sir A. H. McMahon, G.C.V.O., K.C.I.E., C.S.I.: His Holiness the Dalai Lama of Tibet, Lönchen Ga-den Shatra Pal-jor Dorje;

And whereas Sir A. H. McMahon and Lönchen Ga-den Shatra Pal-jor Dorje have communicated to each other since their respective full powers and have found them to be in good and true form, the following Regulations have been agreed upon:—

I. The area falling within a radius of three miles from the British Trade Agency site will be considered as the area of such Trade Mart.

It is agreed that British subjects may lease lands for the building of houses and godowns at the Marts. This arrangement shall not be held to prejudice the right of British subjects to rent houses and godowns outside the Marts for their own accommodation

and the storage of their goods. British subjects desiring to lease building sites shall apply through the British Trade Agent to the Tibetan Trade Agent. In consultation with the British Trade Agent the Tibetan Trade Agent will assign such or other suitable building sites without unnecessary delay. They shall fix the terms of the leases in conformity with the existing laws and rates.

II. The administration of the Trade Marts shall remain with the Tibetan Authorities, with the exception of the British Trade Agency sites and compounds of the rest-houses, which will be under the exclusive control of the British Trade Agents. The Trade Agents at the Marts and Frontier Officers shall be of suitable rank, and shall hold personal intercourse and correspondence with one another on terms of mutual respect and friendly treatment.

III. In the event of disputes arising at the Marts or on the routes to the Marts between British subjects and subjects of other nationalities, they shall be enquired into and settled in personal conference between the British and Tibetan Trade Agents at the nearest Mart. Where there is a divergence of view the law of the country to which the defendant belongs shall guide.

All questions in regard to rights, whether of property or person, arising between British subjects, shall be subject to the jurisdiction of the British Authorities.

British subjects, who may commit any crime at the Marts or on the routes to the Marts, shall be handed over by the Local Authorities to the British Trade Agent at the Mart nearest to the scene of the offence, to be tried and punished according to the laws of India, but such British subjects shall not be subjected by the Local Authorities to any ill—usage in excess of necessary restraint.

Tibetan subjects, who may be guilty of any criminal act towards British subjects, shall be arrested and punished by the Tibetan Authorities according to law.

Should it happen that a Tibetan subject or subjects bring a criminal complaint against a British subject or subjects before the British Trade Agent, the Tibetan Authorities shall have the right to send a representative or representatives of suitable rank to attend the trial in the British Trade Agent's Court. Similarly in cases in which a British subject or subjects have reason to complain against a Tibetan subject or subjects, the British Trade Agent shall have the right to send a representative or representatives to the Tibetan Trade Agent's Court to attend the trial.

IV. The Government of India shall retain the right to maintain the telegraph lines from the Indian frontier to the Marts. Tibetan messages will be duly received and transmitted by these lines. The Tibetan Authorities shall be responsible for the due protection of the telegraph lines from the Marts to the Indian frontier, and it is agreed that all persons damaging the lines or interfering with them in any way or with the officials engaged in the inspection or maintenance thereof shall at once be severely punished.

V. The British Trade Agents at the various Trade Marts now or hereafter to be established in Tibet may make arrangements for the carriage and transport of their posts to and from the frontier of India. The couriers employed in conveying these posts shall receive all possible assistance from the Local Authorities whose districts they traverse, and shall be accorded the same protection and facilities as the persons employed in carrying the despatches of the Tibetan Government.

No restrictions whatever shall be placed on the employment by British officers and traders of Tibetan subjects in any lawful capacity. The persons so employed shall not be exposed to any kind of molestation or suffer any loss of civil rights, to which they

may be entitled as Tibetan subjects, but they shall not be exempted from lawful taxation. If they be guilty of any criminal act, they shall be dealt with by the Local Authorities according to law without any attempt on the part of their employer to screen them.

VI. No rights of monopoly as regards commerce or industry shall be granted to any official or private company, institution, or individual in Tibet. It is of course understood that companies and individuals, who have already received such monopolies from the Tibetan Government previous to the conclusions of this agreement, shall retain their rights and privileges until the expiry of the period fixed.

VII. British subjects shall be at liberty to deal in kind or in money, to sell their goods to whomsoever they please, to hire transport of any kind, and to conduct in general their business transactions in conformity with local usage and without any vexations, restrictions or oppressive exactions whatever. The Tibetan Authorities will not hinder the British Trade Agents or other British subjects from holding personal intercourse or correspondence with the inhabitants of the country.

It being the duty of the Police and the Local Authorities to afford efficient protection at all times to the persons and property of the British subjects at the Marts and along the routes to the Marts, Tibet engages to arrange effective Police measures at the Marts and along the routes to the Marts.

VIII. Import and export in the following Articles: — arms, ammunition, military stores, liquors and intoxicating or narcotic drugs may at the option of either Government be entirely prohibited, or permitted only on such conditions as either Government on their own side may think fit to impose.

IX. The present Regulations shall be in force for a period of ten years reckoned from the date of signature by the two Plenipotentiaries; but, if no demand for revision be made on either side within six months after the end of the first ten years the Regulations shall remain in force for another ten years from the end of the first ten years; and so it shall be at the end of each successive ten years.

X. The English and Tibetan texts of the present Regulations have been carefully compared, but in the event of there being any difference of meaning between them the English text shall be authoritative.

XI. The present Regulations shall come into force from the date of signature.

Done at Simla this third day of July, AD one thousand nine hundred and fourteen, corresponding with the Tibetan date, the tenth day of the fifth month of the Wood-Tiger year.

Seal of the
Dalai Lama.

A. Henry MCMAHON,
British Plenipotentiary.

Signature of the Lönchen Shatra.

Seal of the British Plenipotentiary

Seal of the
Drepung
Monastery.

Seal of the
Sera
Monastery.

Seal of the
Gaden
Monastery.

Seal of the
National
Assembly.

Negotiated and signed only by the British and Tibetan plenipotentiaries.

THE McMAHON LINE

Alastair Lamb

Source: A. Lamb, *The McMahon Line*, 2 vols., London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1966, vol. 2, pp. 530–66. Original map numbers retained.

The Simla Convention, even if the Chinese had signed it, would not in itself have provided a final solution to the problem of the British border in the Assam Himalayas. The Inner-Outer Tibet partition, it is true, would on paper have kept the Chinese from direct territorial contact with the tribal hills; but it offered no guarantee that the Tibetans would not in the future raise claims, with Chinese support, to rights and influence in regions which since 1910 the Indian Government thought ought to be firmly located within the British sphere. Since 1910, mainly as a result of the Abor Expedition and its offshoots, the Indian Government had acquired a fairly clear idea of where its border in the Assam Himalayas ought to be. What it now needed, in addition to the guarantee of the exclusion of Chinese power from Outer Tibet, was some treaty definition of this boundary alignment; and such a document was one of the prizes which Hardinge and McMahon hoped to win during the Simla Conference. The Assam border, however, was a subject which, [for reasons already noted], the Indian Government had decided it did not want to discuss with China: there were good grounds, therefore, for not placing it on the Simla agenda. It seemed wiser to use the Simla Conference as the occasion for direct Anglo-Tibetan discussions on the border, without Chinese participation, the results of which might, if the opportunity presented itself, be confirmed, though perhaps indirectly, in the final tripartite agreement. As we shall see, by an exchange of notes on 24/25 March 1914 McMahon obtained Tibetan agreement to a boundary alignment which has since become famous as the McMahon Line; and by the judicious use of a little extra red ink in prolonging the frontier of greater Tibet on the map attached to the draft Simla Conventions, McMahon endeavoured to obtain Chinese acknowledgment of his Line.

Since the deterioration in Sino-Indian relations in the 1950s Indian officials have maintained that the McMahon Line notes merely 'formalised the natural, traditional, ethnic and administrative boundary in the area'.¹ The tribal tracts in the Assam Himalayas, it has been stated, were already under Indian administration in the eighth century AD when the *Yogini Purana* was written; and have been continuously so from that date to the present time. As one Indian writer has put it:

The entire tribal area up to the McMahon Line has been under continuous Ahom and, later, British administration. Under the latter, from the outset,

the tribal areas were under the jurisdiction of the Political Agents or Deputy Commissioners of the adjoining districts. . . . No boundary in the world can claim to have been as free from disputes and as well established by tradition, treaty and administration as the India-China boundary.²

Unfortunately, it cannot be said that this picture of the administrative history of the Assam Himalayas, however much it might suit the demands of modern Indian diplomacy, is a true one. At the time of the Chinese occupation of Lhasa in early 1910 Tibetan administration, either directly or indirectly, extended in the Tawang Tract right down to the edge of the Assam plains. At that time the British had made but the most superficial penetration in the Assam Himalayas except in the Lohit Valley, where a number of British and other European travellers had recognised the location of the Tibetan frontier in the neighbourhood of Walong; and even on the Lohit it could not at that time be said that the Mishmi tribes had in any legally binding way come under British sovereignty. The McMahon Line which was defined in the Anglo-Tibetan notes of 24 and 25 March 1914 and in the map referred to in those notes was not an ancient Indian border. It was a new frontier alignment designed to replace the old Outer Line along the foothills. It was not based on traditions of great age, but was the result of active British survey work following Williamson's murder by Abor tribesmen in early 1911.

The genesis of the McMahon Line as an Indian frontier alignment is to be found in Lord Minto's telegram of 23 October 1910, to which reference has already been made.³ On this occasion, as a result of the evidence which had come to light of Chinese interest in the Mishmi country along the Lohit, Minto proposed 'to gain a buffer' between British and Chinese territory by advancing northward the Outer Line: he suggested that the new boundary should follow the general line of the crests of the Assam Himalayan range from the eastern edge of the Tawang Tract to the Irrawaddy-Salween divide. The Tawang Tract in 1910 was still regarded by the Indian Government as so firmly Tibetan, all the way down to the foothills, that it was not proposed then to bring it within British India as a result of the new boundary. The 1910 proposals were extremely vague. Geographical information about the Assam Himalayas, with the exception of the Lohit Valley, was meagre indeed. British officials, again with the exception of the Lohit, had only penetrated into the hills north of the Outer Line for a depth of a very few miles in a small number of places. In these circumstances the Home Government felt itself unable to make any decision on Minto's proposal, and the issue was postponed.

On 21 September 1911, after Williamson's murder had had time to make its impact felt on Indian frontier policy, Lord Hardinge repeated Lord Minto's suggested alignment for a new Indo-Tibetan border in Assam as part of his recommended policy of 'loose political control'. Lord Crewe, while questioning some of the implications of 'loose political control', agreed that a new frontier of this general type seemed to be called for; and it was decided that one of the objects of the Abor Expedition and its related ventures, the Miri Mission and the Mishmi Mission, would be to determine the most suitable alignment for the new boundary, which was to keep the Chinese as far away from the Indian plains as could possibly be reconciled with the facts of Tibetan occupation. By the end of 1913 the Indian Government was in possession of sufficient information to enable it to describe the proposed alignment in considerable

detail. There were stretches, of course, which were still unexplored; but the crest of the Assam Himalayas was no longer the *terra incognita* it had been to the Indian Foreign Department in October 1910.

The obvious principle upon which to base the new frontier alignment was, as many Indian observers have pointed out during the course of the Sino-Indian dispute, the watershed between rivers flowing into Assam and those flowing into Tibet. Unfortunately, the Assam Himalayas do not lend themselves particularly well to a uniform application of the watershed concept of boundary making. The range is cut through by the Tsangpo-Brahmaputra, one of the great rivers of Asia flowing through thousands of miles of undoubted Tibetan territory from its source not far from the sources of the Indus. The true watershed between the Indian plains and Central Asia would lie north of the Tsangpo and its tributaries; and a boundary following this line would include Lhasa, Shigatse and Gyantse and most of the towns of Central Tibet within India. As exploration of the Assam Himalayas proceeded it was discovered that the Tsangpo-Brahmaputra was by no means the only river which would have to be crossed by the proposed new boundary. On the extreme east, where Burma meets Tibet, the upper reaches of the Taron, a tributary of the Nmaihska branch of the Irrawaddy, ran through a region of Tibetan population. The Lohit, as had long been known, north of Walong became the Zayul Chu in the Tibetan district of Zayul. To the west of the Tsangpo-Brahmaputra valley in the Assam Himalayas the Subansiri and its tributary the Chayul Chu were found to have sources well within undoubted Tibetan territory, as also did the Nyamjang Chu, the river which passed from Tibet through the northern part of the Tawang Tract into Eastern Bhutan. It was clear, therefore, that, unless the new boundary was going to result in the British annexation of a great deal of Tibet, it would have to run across at least six major rivers. The McMahon Line, the final form of this boundary, therefore, did not, in fact, follow the main India-Central Asia watershed. Rather, it was drawn along a series of watersheds between the valleys of the major rivers which had their sources to the north of the line of the highest peaks of the Himalayan range. In several sections of the alignment McMahon and his advisers were obliged to decide between two or more watershed-lines. There was nothing inevitable about the definition of the McMahon line in detail: this was as much the result of a series of British decisions as of the clear dictates of tradition and ethnology.

In selecting a satisfactory new boundary the Indian Government faced particular difficulties in the Tawang Tract (Map no. 16). Here, as has already been remarked, Tibetan territory was considered to extend from the crest of the range right down to the foot of the hills a few miles north of Udalguri. Neither in Minto's proposals of 23 October 1910 nor those of Hardinge of 21 September 1911 was there any suggestion that the boundary between British India and the Tawang Tract should be modified. To do so, it must have been thought, would involve the annexation of Tibetan territory, a step contrary to the letter of the Anglo-Russian Convention of 1907. The Tawang Tract, however, could not be ignored. It constituted a salient under Tibetan (and hence, potential Chinese) control which cut right through the barrier of the Himalayas. As a weak point in the British defences Tawang was far more serious than the Chumbi Valley farther to the west. By June 1912, therefore, the Indian General Staff had decided that, notwithstanding the terms of the 1907 British agreement with Russia, something should be done about Tawang. It noted that:

The demarcation of the frontier line about Tawang requires careful consideration. The present boundary (demarcated)⁴ is south of Tawang, running westwards along the foothills from near Udalgiri to the southern Bhutan border, and thus a dangerous wedge is thrust between the Miri country and Bhutan. A comparatively easy and much used trade route traverses this wedge from north to south, by which the Chinese would be able to exert influence or pressure on Bhutan, while we have no approach to this salient from a flank, as we have in the case of the Chumbi salient. A rectification of the boundary here is therefore imperative, and an ideal line would appear to be one from the knot of mountains near Long. 93°, Lat. 28°20', to the Bhutan border north of Chona Dzong [Tsöna] in a direct east and west line with the northern frontier of Bhutan. There appears to be a convenient water shed for it to follow.⁵

The proposed boundary modification implied in this view of the Indian General Staff was extreme indeed, involving the British occupation of not only Tawang and the Mönpa inhabited districts to the south but also the Tibetan administrative of Tsöna Dzong. The Indian Government, while becoming convinced of the need to take over some of the Tawang Tract, evidently concluded that a more southerly alignment would meet its requirements. In a memorandum of 28 October 1913 McMahon indicated that the Indian Government was still bound to abide by a foothill border in the Tawang area; and he enclosed the skeleton map, based on the Royal Geographical Society map, *Tibet and the Surrounding Regions*, edition of 1906, at a scale of 1 : 3,800,000, which was used throughout the Simla Conference to indicate various boundary claims, showing the British frontier running eastwards from Bhutan just north of Dewangiri and Udalguri until it had quite passed the Tawang Tract, whereupon it ran sharply northward to meet what later became the McMahon Line on the western side of the Subansiri Valley.⁶ By the middle of November 1913 a more advanced alignment had been decided upon. Lord Hardinge had now been persuaded that the new boundary should run along the ridge crossed by the Se La (Pass), a few miles south of Tawang monastery.⁷ This remained the position until February 1914. In an outline map which Sir Henry McMahon sent to Sir Arthur Hirtzel on 22 January 1914, and which showed the alignment of the new boundary in the Assam Himalayas as it was then shaping during discussions with the Lönchen Shatra, the Se La boundary was still marked.⁸ In another map, however, which McMahon sent to Hirtzel on 19 February 1914, the boundary was shown a bit farther north, following the alignment of the final McMahon Line and including all of the region of Tawang monastery within British India.⁹

The precise reasons for this change in the proposed alignment remain uncertain. No minutes of Anglo-Tibetan discussions over the McMahon Line in the first three months of 1914 are, it seems, preserved in the archives of the India Office and the Foreign Office; and there are grounds for supposing that such minutes were never, in fact, sent to London. The most likely explanation for the inclusion of Tawang monastery within British territory is, perhaps, that in late 1913 McMahon had at his disposal accurate and up-to-date information about the Tawang Tract from Bailey and Morshead, who came down through Tawang on their return from the adventurous journey along the Tsangpo Valley, and who arrived in Simla to report to McMahon on 26 November 1913.¹⁰ Bailey, in his report, showed that Tawang monastery played a crucial role in

the administration of the Mönpa tribes south of the Se La; and it probably seemed to McMahon, after due reflection, that any future British administration south of the Se La would be made easier by some measure of British control over the Tawang monks.¹¹ Moreover, McMahon seems to have had some hope that with the advance northwards of the British border the old trade route between Tibet and Assam through Tawang would revive.¹² From Bailey's report he may well have concluded that the Tawang monks, if left to their own devices, would probably place all manner of obstacles in the way of traders following the Tawang road.

To the east of the Tawang Tract there was a stretch of the new boundary alignment which crossed the Subansiri (known in Tibet as the Tsari Chu) and its tributary the Chayul Chu (Map no. 7). It had been the intention of the Miri Mission to visit this region; but the hostile attitude of the tribesmen on the upper Kamla tributary of the Subansiri had forced Kerwood and his party to turn back long before they had reached the southern limits of Tibet. On this remote tract Bailey and Morshead, who had reached the upper Subansiri from the Tibetan side, were able to provide the first reliable information. They noted that on the Subansiri, or Tsari Chu, Migyitun marked the southern limit of Tibetan occupation, and that below that point lay *Lopa* (tribal) territory. However, they discovered that the Tibetans were in the habit of making pilgrimages at twelve-yearly intervals down the Subansiri well south of Migyitun, bribing the *Lopa* tribesmen heavily with salt and other goods to dissuade them from massacring the devout travellers.¹³ On Bailey's advice, McMahon seems to have decided that the new boundary should run just below Migyitun, but with the understanding that some small modifications might have to be made here to meet Tibetan religious susceptibilities.

East of the Subansiri was the valley of the Tsangpo-Brahmaputra where that great river had carved its way through the Himalayan massif (Map no. 17). Here the determination of a satisfactory alignment for the boundary involved several difficult decisions. Firstly, on the upper reaches of the Siyom tributary of the Tsangpo-Brahmaputra there were settled Buddhist populations who had, it seemed, come under the feudal control of the great Lhalu family of Tibet and who paid dues of some kind to the Tibetan authorities of Kongbo district. Secondly, along the Tsangpo-Brahmaputra Valley itself it was by no means easy to draw a sharp dividing line between Abor and Tibetan or Tibetan-influenced settlement. There were Abor villages farther upstream than the lowest Tibetan villages, and into the region through which the McMahon Line was to be drawn Bhutanese had migrated during the nineteenth century, settlers who still in 1913 considered themselves to be the subjects of the Tongsa Penlop. Relations between the Abors and the Tibetans and Mönpas (a term used here to cover both people from the Tawang area and from Eastern Bhutan) had been far from peaceful. Past campaigns had imposed on Abor villages not far north of the old Outer Line the obligation to render various forms of tribute to the Tibetan authorities in Pome and Kongbo. As a result of British survey and exploration during 1912 and 1913 it had become apparent that up to Korbo the Dihang (or Siang) Valley was predominantly settled by Abors, who, though in many cases in some kind of relationship with Tibet, could not on cultural or linguistic grounds be classified as Tibetans. North of Korbo to the point where the Nyalam and Chimdru rivers flowed into the Tsangpo-Siang, in the district sometimes known as Pemakoichen, there was a mixed population with, perhaps, Tibetans and Mönpas in the majority. North of the Nyalam-Chimdru line

the settled population was predominantly Tibetan, though Abor (or *Lopa*) groups came here from time to time for purposes of trade. The Tibetan and Mönpa villages in Pemakoichen, however, had been established fairly recently, none being more than a century old, at the expense of the Abors. Dundas and Nevill, in the light of all the available information, proposed in October 1913 two possible boundary alignments across the Dihang Valley.¹⁴ One, which included Pemakoichen, ran as far north as the Nam La and the recently discovered peak, Namche Barwa, over 25,000 feet high. This would bring into British territory a number of Tibetans and Mönpas, but it could be justified on the grounds that Pemakoichen had once been Abor territory. Another alignment crossed the Siang farther south between the villages of Korbo and Mongku. It excluded country where the Abors were now in a minority, and it was probably far easier to administer. This alignment the Indian Government resolved to adopt.

To the east of the Dihang Valley lay the basin of Dibang, which had been visited in 1912 and 1913 by parties branching off from the Mishmi Mission up the Lohit.¹⁵ At the head of the Dibang Valley, on the Dri, Andra and Yongyap tributaries, Tibetans had been settling during the first decade of the twentieth century. They were seeking, it seemed, a holy place with a mountain made entirely of glass of which a Tibetan prophet had once spoken. These settlers had come into conflict with the Mishmi tribesmen of the region, and by 1913 they had found local resistance too much for them, and all but a few, mainly those too old or ill to travel, had returned to Tibet. Hence no real problem existed as to the line of the boundary on the upper Dibang basin: it should follow the watershed between the Dibang and its tributaries on the one hand and rivers flowing northward into Tibet on the other.

Eastward of the Dibang lay the Lohit, the one region in the Assam Himalayas of which the British possessed much detailed knowledge before the days of the Abor Expedition (Map no. 18). On the Lohit, unlike any other part of the Assam border, the Chinese had indicated exactly where they thought their frontier ought to be. They had put up boundary markers at the Yepak River in 1910 and again twice in 1912. They had also indicated that they thought that their border touched the north bank of the Lohit where that river was joined by the Delei. From the Delei-Lohit junction the Chinese claimed border, so Chen's submission of November 1913, [referred to above], would indicate, ran eastward across the Dibang basin to the Tsangpo-Siang, which it crossed at just about the same place as the British had decided their border ought to go.¹⁶ British officials like Williamson and Bailey had been inclined to agree that the Yepak was quite a fair boundary point on the Lohit. It marked as good a divide between Mishmi and Tibetan settlement as was likely to be found. It had, however, a number of disadvantages which were pointed out by Dundas in 1913 on the basis of his experiences during the Mishmi Mission.¹⁷ In the first place, a Chinese boundary point at the Yepak which also implied a Chinese boundary point at the Delei-Lohit junction was quite out of the question. A Chinese, or, for that matter, a Tibetan, post at the point where the Delei flowed into the Lohit would be situated deep in Mishmi country and astride the route from Sadiya to the proposed British frontier post at Menilkrai near the Yepak. This fact alone was sufficient to suggest that the entire frontier alignment here should be shifted north so that it placed the whole Delei Valley in British hands. It would be as well, in these circumstances, also to push the boundary up the Lohit. Firstly, there would be obtained an easier watershed line from the Glei Pass at the head of the Delei. Secondly, just north of the Yepak, along the

Di Chu and Sal Ti streams, ran routes from Zayul into the Hkamtilong district of Northern Burma by way of the Talok Pass. The Chinese were already infiltrating into Hkamtilong from the Yunnanese side. If they ever returned to Tibet they might try to do so from this direction as well. It would be prudent to close this particular door while the opportunity existed. Dundas was able to argue that the Chinese-claimed boundary point on the Yepak was not so reasonable as his predecessor Williamson had believed. 'Just the one visit of the Chinese to Menilkrai', he wrote, 'and the planting there of their flags, which indicate no boundary line, and the notification, has given rise to the belief that the land above as far as the Tho Chu cannot be claimed by us.' Ignoring the fact that the Chinese had thrice visited the Yepak, not once, Dundas went on to show that while significant Mishmi settlement ceased below the Yepak, yet Tibetan settlement did not really begin until the village of Kahao, where the Di Chu joined the Lohit. In between there were but four Tibetan houses (one each at Walong and Tinne and two at Dong) in a region where Mishmis were accustomed to graze their cattle. Some of the Tibetans here, indeed, Dundas said, were actually employed as herdsmen by the Mishmis. The tract between the Yepak and the Tho Chu and Di Chu was really 'Tom Tiddler's ground'. Dundas suggested that the new boundary should run eastwards along a watershed from the Glei Pass to the Lohit along the northern side of the Tho Chu, cross the Lohit just south of the village of Kahao (in his opinion the most southerly Tibetan *village*), and then run on eastward along the ridge between the Kri Ti and Di Chu streams to the Talok Pass. The Indian Government, so as the better to secure the Talok Pass route into Hkamtilong, improved slightly on this proposal by including Kahao in British territory and running the line from the Lohit to the Talok Pass along the northern side of the Di Chu.¹⁸

In February 1914, before the Tibetans had even accepted the new boundary, the proposed alignment across the Lohit was enforced by British administrative action.¹⁹ On 1 January 1914 T. P. M. O'Callaghan, Dundas's assistant with responsibility for the Mishmi tribal areas, with an escort of thirty-nine Gurkhas, set out from Sadiya on a tour up the Lohit. At the beginning of February he reached the Yepak, where he saw traces of the Manchu Chinese boundary markers of 1910 and early 1912, as well as a new marker put up in June 1912 by officials of the Chinese Republic after the Mishmi Mission had withdrawn from Menilkrai. O'Callaghan uprooted all the markers he could find and took them with him upstream to Kahao where he hid them in the undergrowth. He justified this action on the grounds that

it is possible in after years an attempt would be made to misinterpret our omission as a tacit admission of Chinese and Tibetan claims, had we allowed them to remain, and by my action in removing them and leaving them near Kahao we have acknowledged no claims.²⁰

From Kahao O'Callaghan went on to Rima, where he was warmly welcomed by the local Tibetan authorities, who asked how the Simla Conference was progressing and who assured him that they believed Tibetan interests were safe in British hands. He could detect no remaining trace of Chinese influence in Zayul. At the time when O'Callaghan moved the Chinese markers there is evidence that the Indian Government had not yet made up its mind to bring the boundary north of Kahao, which was beyond doubt a Tibetan settlement. O'Callaghan's action, however, endorsed by

Sir Archdale Earle, the Chief Commissioner for Assam, decided the question once and for all.²¹ Kahao became British and the boundary was run north of the Di Chu.

East of the Lohit lay British Burma. Here also was an undefined border with Tibet which could not be ignored if the eastern flank of the new boundary, the McMahon Line, were not to be left in the air (Map no. 19). It was necessary to create some link between the Talok Pass, the new Tibet-India-Burma trijunction, and the Isu Razi Pass on the Salween-Irrawaddy divide which the British claimed was their border with Yunnan Province.²² Here there existed the problem of the Taron, a tributary of the Nmaiha branch of the Irrawaddy with its sources near the Tibetan towns of Drowa and Menkong. Its highest reaches were certainly inhabited by a few Tibetans, and across its upper basin ran the main road linking Zayul, Pome and Kongbo to Yunnan via Menkong and Atuntze. A true watershed line around the Taron, therefore, would result in a British intrusion into undoubted Tibetan territory, and at the point, moreover, where the Inner-Outer Tibet border of the Simla Convention map had its origin. In the winter of 1912-13 the Taron Valley was explored by Captains Pritchard and Waterfield, thus adding greatly to information which Pritchard and Bailey had acquired in 1911-12.²³ This venture, which was to cost Pritchard his life, demonstrated that the ideal line for the British border was one which crossed the Taron at latitude 27°40'. North of this point the inhabitants had never paid any tribute to the chiefs of Hkamtilong and regarded themselves as Tibetan subjects. The military authorities also agreed that the British should not assume any responsibility for the defence of the northern Taron Valley. The suggestion of Pritchard and Waterfield was accepted by the Indian Government and embodied in the McMahon Line.²⁴

Once the Indian Government had decided upon the detailed alignment of its new boundary, 850 miles long, in the Assam Himalayas, it had to arrange for Tibetan acceptance of proposals involving, in fact, the British annexation of some 2,000 square miles of territory which, hitherto, the Dalai Lama had looked upon as part of his dominions. This was achieved between January and March 1914, while the Simla Conference was in Delhi, through discussion between Charles Bell and the Lönchen Shatra. The result was the Anglo-Tibetan exchange of secret notes of 24/25 March 1914.²⁵ The texts of the notes were first published in 1929, and from them we can derive some picture of what went on in the talks which gave rise to them.²⁶ Unfortunately, the Indian Government does not appear to have seen fit to communicate with London the minutes of the Bell-Lönchen Shatra negotiations; and it is unlikely that the present Indian Government will reveal in the immediate future these documents which touch so closely upon the modern Sino-Indian boundary dispute.²⁷

The information on the geography of the Assam Himalayas which had been acquired since 1911 was embodied in a map, at a scale of eight miles to the inch, in two sheets, entitled 'North East Frontier of India, Provisional'. On this map, which was still far from perfect, though better than anything hitherto available, the new boundary, the McMahon Line, was drawn.²⁸ The Lönchen Shatra had now to be persuaded to accept the Line. Lacking the minutes, it is not easy to say exactly how this feat was accomplished; but some general conclusions are possible. It seems most probable, in the first place, that the Lönchen Shatra saw the McMahon Line as part of a greater bargain: so at least the Tibetans were to argue at a later date. Tibet would agree to a boundary with the British to the taste of the Indian Government. The British would guarantee a Tibetan boundary with China more to the taste of the Dalai Lama than

anything he could hope to secure unaided. Such a bargain, if it were ever made, implicitly or explicitly, would go far to explain McMahon's reluctance to make concessions to the Chinese over the alignment of the Inner-Outer Tibet boundary. If so, then the McMahon Line contributed to the failure of the Simla Conference, which in turn, ironically, was a factor in the eventual failure of the McMahon Line as a final solution to the problem of the security of the Assam Himalayas.

In the second place, it is clear from the few available documents that the Lönchen Shatra did not surrender unconditionally Tibetan claims and rights south of the McMahon Line. In the Tawang Tract he secured the retention of what he must have considered tax-collecting rights, albeit disguised under the term 'certain dues now collected by the Tibetan Government . . . from the Mönpas and Lopas for articles sold'. A similar condition was applied to the Siang and Lohit valleys. The estates of the Lhalu family on the upper Siyom, moreover, the Lönchen Shatra appears to have insisted would not be disturbed in any way. Finally, on the upper reaches of the Subansiri the Tibetan pilgrimages would go on as before with no British interference. To these conditions McMahon appears to have agreed – such is the most logical interpretation of his note to the Lönchen Shatra of 24 March 1914. He also, agreed that the Tibetans, if they felt they were suffering other losses or difficulties through the McMahon Line, should have the right to reopen discussions on the subject with Charles Bell. The McMahon Line, therefore, was to some extent provisional and experimental, as McMahon indicated rather obliquely to Hardinge and Crewe when he wrote that

the Tibetan Government at Lhasa has fully considered this frontier question and agrees with the Tibetan plenipotentiary in recognising the line now defined as the correct boundary between India and Tibet. They have shown a great desire throughout the course of our discussions regarding our mutual frontier to show a reasonable and just attitude. Should it be found desirable in the light of more detailed knowledge which the Tibetan Government and ourselves may acquire in the future to modify the course of the boundary line at any place, we shall doubtless endeavour to show a similar attitude in regard to Tibetan interests, although no obligation to do so has been mentioned in the agreements.²⁹

The McMahon Line, on this analysis, has rather strange constitutional implications. Areas like the Tawang Tract, the upper Siang and Siyom valleys, and the Lohit between the Yepak and Kahao, were brought within the territorial limits of the British Indian Empire. Yet they were not to become British-administered territory. They were, in fact, more like British-protected regions on the analogy of Bhutan, with internal autonomy. Bhutan, however, was a political unit in its own right. Bhutanese administered it. Regions like Tawang, on the other hand, were administered by officials appointed from without the British Empire in its widest sense and responsible to a foreign government. Thus it could be argued that portions of Tibet, such as Tawang, had passed into the British sphere of interest, and the McMahon Line here was less an international boundary than a line below which the Indian Government would not tolerate the influence of any Power (i.e. China) other than Tibet; and Tibetan influence would only be accepted if it were unobtrusive. To this view, the only interpretation which the Tibetans were likely to accept, McMahon was also to a great extent committed

by the policy of 'loose political control'. Even on the Lohit, for example, where Lord Crewe had accepted in principle the need for an advanced British outpost, British troops were not permitted to be stationed north of the Yepak where the Chinese had placed their boundary markers.

The McMahon Line boundary involved, as we have seen, the nominal transfer of territory from Tibet to India. Since this transaction took place at the very moment when British, Tibetan and Chinese delegates were discussing the signature of a convention declaring that Tibet was under Chinese suzerainty and that it formed part of the territory of China, McMahon must have concluded that it would be as well to obtain some kind of Chinese approval for his Line. The Assam Himalayan border, however, was not on the agenda of the Conference; and the British had no wish to discuss it with the Chinese, whom, they held, it did not concern. It would not be easy, therefore, to secure Chinese approval for an agreement of which they were not informed (the Anglo-Tibetan notes of 24/25 March) on a subject which was not formally mentioned to them; but McMahon attempted to do just this. His instrument was the skeleton map, at a scale of 1 : 3,800,000, on which boundaries were continually being drawn throughout the course of the Conference. On this map McMahon indicated what he thought should be the proper limits of Inner and Outer Tibet. The boundary of 'greater' Tibet, that is to say of the region to be partitioned, was indicated by a red line. The boundary between Inner and Outer Tibet, that is to say, between Chinese and autonomous Tibetan territory, was shown by means of a blue line. Since, in theory, the Conference was only concerned with Sino-Tibetan border issues, the red line on McMahon's skeleton map was not carried all the way round 'greater' Tibet. It began suddenly on the Karakash River in the extreme north-west and ended equally abruptly just above Tawang on the south-east. From the Karakash River to the Burma-Tibet-China trijunction at the Izu Razi Pass the red line separated Tibet from China: from the Izu Razi Pass onwards to Tawang the red line divided Tibet from British India. The Chinese, if they ever agreed to the limits of Inner and Outer Tibet so indicated, would also find that they had accepted the McMahon Line: unless, of course, they discovered in time what McMahon was up to and demanded that the Izu Razi Pass-Tawang stretch of the red line be removed. Ivan Chen, probably no better at maps than the average Indian diplomat who has argued his country's case during the present Sino-Indian boundary dispute, appears not to have detected McMahon's sleight of hand: or, if he did spot something, to have been too intimidated by the overpowering British delegation to protest. He duly initialled on 27 April 1914 a map on which the McMahon Line was shown, an action which the Chinese have never been allowed to forget.

Why, one may well ask, did not the Indian Government, when it had the opportunity, secure some definition of the entire Tibetan border? Why leave unsettled the stretch between Tawang and the Karakash? There are several reasons why the red line stopped at Tawang and on the Karakash. Firstly, as we have already noted, the Indian Government did not want to embark upon a discussion of the Tibeto-Nepalese and Tibeto-Bhutanese boundaries.³⁰ Neither of these had been satisfactorily defined. Each would provide the raw material for a great deal of argument, and neither could really be considered without inviting to the Conference representatives from the states concerned. McMahon certainly did not want to bring Nepal and Bhutan into the Simla Conference in any way. The Sikkim-Tibet frontier had already been defined by

treaty in 1890, and there was no need to consider it further. To the west of Nepal lay long stretches of the Indo-Tibetan border which were the subject of minor disputes, such as those in the neighbourhood of the Shipki Pass and elsewhere along the border in what are now East Punjab, Himachal Pradesh and Uttar Pradesh, and those along the Tibet-Ladakh border as at Khurnak, Nyagzu, and Demchok. No doubt a full discussion with the Lönchen Shatra of issues such as these would have consumed much time for very little gain.³¹ Moreover, the added prolongation of the red line on McMahon's map would almost certainly bring into the Conference the question of the alignment of the British as well as the Chinese border with Tibet; and once the British border was being discussed, McMahon's Line in the Assam Himalayas could hardly remain unnoticed.

It is a fact which has received surprisingly little comment in recent years that the Chinese during the course of the Simla Conference, did raise a number of specific claims to territory to the south of the McMahon Line. Chen I-fan, when stating the Chinese case on 12 January 1914, implied that Chao Erh-feng, in 1911, had brought some of the hill tribes of Zayul, a term which appeared to cover Abor and Miri as well as Mishmi territory, under the protection of the Manchu Dynasty.³² At various times during the Conference, when Chen was drawing on the skeleton map his ideas of the Inner-Outer Tibet boundary, the Chinese line always started below Walong at the Yepak tributary to the Lohit, ran westwards to touch the Lohit again at the Lohit-Delei junction, and then cut north-westwards across the Dibang basin to meet the Dihang-Siang at a point a little below the McMahon alignment.³³ From the Dihang-Siang Chen's line continued northwesterly to Giamda in Tibet, which the Chinese delegation maintained was a town on the Sino-Tibetan border. When Chen withdrew the Inner-Outer Tibetan boundary to the Salween, it might be argued that he then abandoned all claims to Assam Himalayan territory. This Chinese concession, however, was not accepted by the Conference, with the result, we may suppose, that the Chinese reverted to their Giamda boundary claim with all that it implied in the tribal hills of Assam. Why, then, did Chen initial the map attached to the Simla Convention, which showed the McMahon Line in such conflict with Chinese ideas which he, himself, had expressed? Two possible answers suggest themselves. First, Chen must have realised that his actions would be repudiated by his own Government, so it did not really matter what he initialled. Second, in view of the intense moral pressure to which he was subjected before he agreed to initial, it is very unlikely that he gave much thought to the little appendix to the red line marking the Tibetan border on the Convention map which has since become famous as the McMahon Line.

There can be no doubt that McMahon was being less than straightforward in his scheme for obtaining Chinese approval for his Line. Had the Chinese actually signed the Convention, they would certainly have found it hard to deny some degree of validity to the definition of the Indo-Tibetan boundary in the Assam Himalayas. However, the Chinese did not sign, and by 1929, when the Anglo-Tibetan notes of 24/25 March were first published – if not much earlier – they surely perceived that they had been the intended victims of a British trick, which would go far to explain the Chinese loathing for the 'illegal' McMahon Line. Ironically, however, the Chinese never seem to have understood that McMahon was also trying to hoodwink them into accepting a change in the status of that baleful tract on the extreme northeastern frontier of Ladakh now familiar to the proverbial schoolboy, Aksai Chin. The Chinese,

when they raised claims to Aksai Chin in the 1950s, do not appear to have realised that the same Simla Convention map which implied Chinese acceptance of the McMahon Line, also implied British (and hence, Indian) acceptance of Tibetan (and hence, Chinese) possession of a part at least of Aksai Chin.

In March 1899 Sir Claude Macdonald presented a note to the Tsungli Yamen in which Chinese rights to a portion of Aksai Chin were recognised.³⁴ The Chinese never replied formally to the note, but the British in the first decade of the twentieth century felt that they were bound by it. With the increasing possibility that the Russians might take over Sinkiang, the Aksai Chin plateau, desolate and unpopulated as it was, acquired in the eyes of British strategists a certain importance as a buffer between potential Russian territory and the passes leading from the Karakoram to the Indian plains. Hence it was argued that it would be as well to do something about Aksai Chin. By virtue of the 1899 note, it would be hard to claim it as British. Why not make it Tibetan? This, at all events, was the view of the Indian Foreign Department under Sir Louis Dane in 1907.³⁵ In 1912, with the Sinkiang situation becoming more critical, Lord Hardinge urged that Aksai Chin, in any readjustment of the Kashgaria-Kashmir border which might be arranged as a precondition for recognition of a Russian protectorate or annexation of Sinkiang, should be kept out of Russian hands. The Simla Conference provided an admirable occasion for achieving such an objective. McMahon almost certainly saw its possibilities. The red line on his map was carried to the north-west to a point on the north bank of the Karakash River so as to outflank Aksai Chin. Since the red line was defined as 'the frontiers of Tibet', and since Tibet here lay south of the red line, then it could only follow that some at least of Aksai Chin was shown as being Tibetan. The point is one difficult to express in words. The position can, perhaps, best be appreciated through maps. Map 20 shows the red line on the Simla Convention map. Map 22 shows the fluctuation of borders in Aksai Chin between 1899 and 1947. Map 21 shows how the extreme western end of the red line on the Simla Convention map follows the same course as does part of the present Indian-claimed border in the Aksai Chin region.³⁶

The validity of the McMahon Line has been defended by the Indian Government of late on three main grounds.³⁷ First, it has been argued that this particular alignment was really the traditional and established boundary between India and Tibet which dated back to antiquity. The weakness of this approach has already been demonstrated in this book, and requires no further comment here. Second, that the Anglo-Tibetan notes of 24/25 March 1914 are a binding and valid agreement in international law. This can hardly be maintained with much conviction. By the 1906 Convention the British had recognised China's right to conduct Tibetan foreign relations and had denied that they could themselves negotiate with Tibet, beyond the scope of the Lhasa Convention and the trade regulations, except through the Chinese. The Simla Conference was summoned to consider whether the nature of Anglo-Tibetan relations could be modified; but when the McMahon Line notes were exchanged the Conference had as yet failed to produce an agreed draft Convention, let alone a signed and sealed instrument. In March 1914, there can be no doubt, the British did not possess the treaty right to come to a bipartite agreement with the Tibetans. Third, that the McMahon Line, whatever the standing of the notes of 24/25 March, was confirmed by the Chinese when Chen on 27 April initialled the draft Convention and the attached map. It has further been pointed out by observant Indians and their supporters,

Sir Olaf Caroe for instance, that Chen, though he said he *initialled* the map, actually *signed* it.³⁸ The original map has been produced in evidence. But this is really semantic horseplay. Initialling is a technical term with implications understood by diplomatists; and, diplomatically speaking, Chen *initialled*. His action, both with respect to the draft Convention and to the map, was promptly repudiated by his Government, as Chen warned McMahon it would be. It is hard to see what validity in international law can be attributed to these proceedings. The Indian Government certainly had no illusions about the Simla Convention, which, it wrote to Charles Bell some time after the Simla Conference had ended, 'has not been signed by the Chinese Government or accepted by the Russian Government, and is therefore for the present invalid'.³⁹ The Chinese never signed it, and the Russians never accepted it, so presumably it has remained invalid ever since.

Sazonov was kept informed of the general nature of the McMahon Line negotiations; but it is certain that no one told him that the cession of Tibetan territory was involved. Despite complicated, and generally misleading, arguments to the contrary in recent years, there can be no real doubt that until 1914 Tawang north of the Se La was as Tibetan as was, say, the Chumbi Valley. It was administered by Tibetan officials, the Tsöna Dzungpons, and it paid revenue to the Dalai Lama's treasury. South of the Se La the position was less clear; but even here the case for Tibetan ownership was very strong. Tawang as brought within British India by the McMahon Line was in area considerably greater than the Chumbi Valley. Had the implications of its annexation been made public, Sazonov could no more have accepted them than he could have a British reoccupation of Chumbi. There can be little doubt, therefore, that by acquiring Tawang the Indian Government had acted in total disregard of the 1907 Anglo-Russian Convention. It is unlikely that Grey and Crewe quite understood what was happening in this part of the Assam Himalayas. They did not, it seems, have the opportunity to study the minutes of the meetings between Bell and Lönchen Shatra at which Tawang was discussed; and they had little detailed knowledge of the extent of Tibetan influence south of the McMahon Line. As we have seen, ever since the Abor Expedition the Indian Government had been rather less than open and above board about what it was doing in the Assam Himalayas. Members of Parliament were unable to find out if an extension of British territory was being contemplated, or merely a consolidation of existing British possessions. Had the truth about Tawang become public in 1914, Grey could not have avoided putting the facts before Sazonov, thus strengthening the Russian case for Afghan and other compensations. In these circumstances it might even have been decided in London that Tawang was best left outside the British Empire.

Having obtained his Line from the Tibetans, McMahon was naturally eager to see that it became something more than an abstract cartographical expression. In his *Memorandum* he urged his Government to make some effort to open up trade routes in the Assam tribal hills, through the Tawang Tract and up the Dihang-Siang and Lohit valleys. Perhaps he did not really believe in the great commercial benefits to British India which he argued would thereby result; but he could hardly have failed to see that trade routes provided the excuse for official British visitations in the remote regions along the McMahon Line, and that the accepted policy of 'commercial' posts in the Abor country might have a wider application. In Tawang, McMahon felt there would be in the immediate future a particularly strong need for the presence of a

British officer to ensure that the implied conditions under which the region entered the British Empire did not work to the British disadvantage. A great deal still had to be learnt about Tawang. The Indian Government would have to establish contact with the great Tawang monastery which dominated the district. Measures would have to be taken to minimise conflict between the Mönpas and the non-Buddhist tribes to their east. McMahon was not proposing, of course, that Tawang should be brought under direct British administration: this would certainly be contrary both to the spirit of the Anglo-Tibetan notes of 24/25 March and to the India Office's declared policy of 'loose political control'. All he asked for was an experimental visit by a British officer 'with experience of administration in tribal country' and with a 'good native assistant of Tibetan experience and a native medical attendant', on the results of which would be based decisions as to policy for the future. When McMahon made this request the Indian Government had already made an experiment along these lines, a fact which he chose to ignore in his *Memorandum*.

In the cold weather of 1913-14 Captain Nevill, Political Officer, Western Section, North East Frontier, took a formidable party of over 1,000 men into the Aka hills between the Tawang Tract and the Subansiri Valley. In late March 1914, after an armed clash with hostile Dafla tribesmen, Nevill and his companion Captain Kennedy, a doctor, made their way towards the Tawang Tract. They reached Dirangdzong on 23 March; and on 1 April they arrived at Tawang town, where they were met by the two Tsöna Dzungpons, the Tibetan officials in charge of the government of the region. Nevill was in no doubt that Tawang, at least 'the country north of the Saila [Se La]' belonged to the Tibetan Government and was 'under Tsöna administration'. South of the Se La, with the exception of the village of Sengedzong, lay the domain of the great Tawang monastery with its more than 500 inhabitants, a daughter house of Drebung monastery at Lhasa. The Tawang officials, both monastic and lay, suspected that Nevill's visit indicated an active British interest in a portion of the Assam Himalayas which hitherto had been virtually neglected by the Indian Government – Morshead and Bailey, in 1913, had been the first Europeans to visit Tawang – and they seemed eager to talk political matters with the new British arrivals. Nevill refused to depart from polite generalities. Though at this time Tawang had been, at least on paper, British for about one week, he made no attempt to inform the Tawang and Tsöna authorities of this fact: indeed, no mention of the Britishness of Tawang was ever made there by an Indian Government official until the 1930s. Nevill on his return, urged the appointment of some permanent British representative in Tawang; but his views were not even formally transmitted to Simla.⁴⁰ With the coming of the First World War the Indian Government were not prepared to contemplate any extension whatsoever of their responsibilities into remote border tracts.⁴¹ Thus nothing was done immediately after the birth of the McMahon Line to indicate to the Lönchen Shatra and the Tibetan Government that they were mistaken in believing that Tawang, though in theory British, remained for all practical purposes a Tibetan district. A similar British inactivity was similarly interpreted in Lhasa in relation to those other sections of the Assam Himalayas where the Tibetans felt they possessed territorial rights.

The Chinese objection to the McMahon Line, which was already being given expression on Chinese maps in Kuomintang times, was based less on the belief that the Line involved the British annexation of large tracts of Tibetan (and hence Chinese) territory than on the conviction that the British and Tibetans had no right to agree

about Lines at all. Wherever the McMahon Line might have run, so long as its treaty basis was found in the events of the Simla Conference, the Chinese would certainly have rejected it. This is a point which Mr. Nehru and his advisers, some of whom should certainly have known better, appear to have failed to appreciate. As a boundary alignment, once the McMahon implications had been removed the 1914 Line had much to recommend it. The annexation by India of Tawang proper was probably a mistake; and it would have been better, from the point of view of securing Tibetan co-operation over the years, if the Line had been kept at the Se La alignment. The advance northwards from the Yepak to beyond the Di Chu on the Lohit was also, perhaps, rather ill advised. The Chinese, after all, had in both late Manchu and early Republican times made a claim to the Yepak boundary, where they had erected boundary markers and proclamations on the extent of Chinese sovereignty; and it was perhaps foolish of McMahon to dismiss these without comment. O'Callaghan's removal of the Chinese markers from the Yepak can hardly be described as a particularly friendly act. In some ways it was a foolish one, for it removed proof that the Chinese believed that their boundary should run far north of the old Outer Line. Elsewhere along the alignment, however, on the Subansiri, the Siang-Dihang (or Tsangpo-Brahmaputra), the Dibang and the Taron, the British showed considerable moderation in selecting their boundary.

Once it was admitted that the non-Buddhist hill tribes, the Mishmis, Abors, Miris, Akas, Daflas and so on, were not Tibetans and had never been, in any legally significant way, Tibetan subjects, then the McMahon Line except in Tawang and on the Lohit provided as reasonable a divide between Tibetan and non-Tibetan populations as could be devised. It was inevitable that there should be some Tibetans south of the Line, as on the upper Siyom and Siang valleys, and there were a few non-Tibetan groups north of the Line in Pemakoichen on the Tsangpo. It is rarely possible in practice to devise a perfect ethnic divide. Had there ever been a genuine attempt at a negotiated Anglo-Chinese boundary settlement, or had the Assam boundary problem been submitted to arbitration, then the result, except in Tawang and on the Lohit, would certainly have been something very like the boundary which McMahon decided upon. This boundary, it should be noted, was essentially an ethnic one, based on the division between Tibetan and non-Tibetan populations. Only in Tawang and on the Lohit, where the ethnic principle was departed from, did it assume the characteristics of a boundary based on geographical features selected for strategic reasons. Apart from these two regions, the argument behind the alignment was not, in fact, that the *traditional* Indian border followed the crest of the Himalayan range; it was that the non-Tibetan or non-Buddhist Assam hill tribes, not being under Tibetan sovereignty, should be incorporated within the Indian Empire. The present Indian Government has failed, or refused, to see this point. It has reiterated that the *traditional* boundary in the Assam Himalayas is also the one which follows the main Himalayan *watershed*. The McMahon Line, India has declared, is a watershed alignment. In fact, the watershed principle was nowhere mentioned in the Anglo-Tibetan notes of 24/25 March 1914. The principle only appears in the language of Sino-Indian boundary treaties in the Sikkim-Tibet Convention of 1890, where a short length of boundary is defined as a water parting between two named river systems: but here there was no attempt to create a general watershed principle for all Himalayan borders.⁴² As we have seen, the McMahon Line did not follow the main watershed

between rivers flowing into the Bay of Bengal and the Arabian Sea on the one hand, and those flowing into the Central Asian deserts and into China and South-East Asia on the other. The only general geographical description which can be given to the McMahon Line is this: it is a boundary more or less following the line of the highest peaks in the Assam Himalayas, these peaks, where possible, being linked by watersheds. This description, however, is by no means comprehensive. A number of the highest peaks, like Namche Barwa on the Tsangpo, lie north of the line. There is nothing inevitable about the watersheds followed. As we have seen, the Indian Government had to choose between a number of possible watershed systems. At intervals the Line departs entirely from the watershed concept to cross a major river like the Nyamjang, the Subansiri, the Siang-Dihang, the Lohit and the Taron. The watershed, really, is here less a universal principle of boundary making than a convenient way to separate populations inhabiting mountain valleys.

The presence or absence of the watershed principle acquires considerable importance when it is appreciated that the McMahon Line is not a perfectly surveyed alignment. By 1914 many of the tracts through which the Line was to run had been surveyed with varying degrees of accuracy; but by no means all the Line had been surveyed. The stretch from the Dihang-Siang to the Bhutanese border was most imperfectly known, the area having been only partially surveyed from the northern side by Bailey and Morshead in 1913, whose work here supplemented the few facts acquired previously by native explorers (Pundits) of the Indian Survey. Thus there inevitably exist errors in the map on which the Line was first drawn. Had the Chinese accepted the McMahon Line as a valid boundary, there would still have been room for a great deal of argument during the process of joint demarcation on the ground. The present Indian Government, when it began in the 1950s to establish posts right on the McMahon Line, found in several places that the alignment, as indicated by the co-ordinates of the 1914 map, did not, in fact, follow the watersheds which seemed to India to be appropriate. The result, ironically, has been that India has laid claim to territory to the *north* of the McMahon Line, in Tawang, for example. Here the Chinese have managed to show most convincingly that the Line and Indian claims do not agree. The Chinese, while in no way accepting the validity of the Line, have taken some delight in pointing out that, even if they did, they still would not be in complete agreement with Indian ideas on the border. India has replied that where the 1914 map does not agree with the watersheds as they exist on the ground it is the watersheds and not the map which should be followed.⁴³ This is a not entirely satisfactory line of argument, and it has led the Legal Adviser of the Indian Ministry of External Affairs to call on precedents from Latin America and from arguments between the Dutch and Portuguese, not to mention the Dutch and Americans, relating to the limits of colonial empires in South-East Asia.⁴⁴ The Chinese, which is hardly surprising, have not been impressed.

Had McMahon ever intended his Line to be anything more than a rather nebulous private arrangement between the Indian Government and the Tibetans, he might well have inserted, as did the negotiators of the Sikkim-Tibet Convention of 1890, some reference to the watershed principle into the text of the agreement by which the Line was defined. He did not, however, do so. If the analysis given earlier on in this chapter of the constitutional basis, as it were, of the McMahon Line is correct, McMahon never anticipated significant Indian administration right up to the Line and never

believed that there would be any need for the precise demarcation of the Line on the ground. All he really wanted was a definition of the *theoretical* limits of British territory. The Line was based on the assumption that its northern side would be in the hands of a weak Tibetan Government whose frontier violations would constitute no significant threat to Indian security. His Line was not designed to keep the Chinese out. The main anti-Chinese barrier was not the McMahon Line; it was the boundary between Inner and Outer Tibet. This barrier, of course, was in the long run destroyed by the Chinese refusal to sign the Simla Convention. It did not stop the Chinese from 'liberating' Outer Tibet in the 1950s and, in the process, subjecting the McMahon Line to stresses which it was never designed to withstand.

Notes

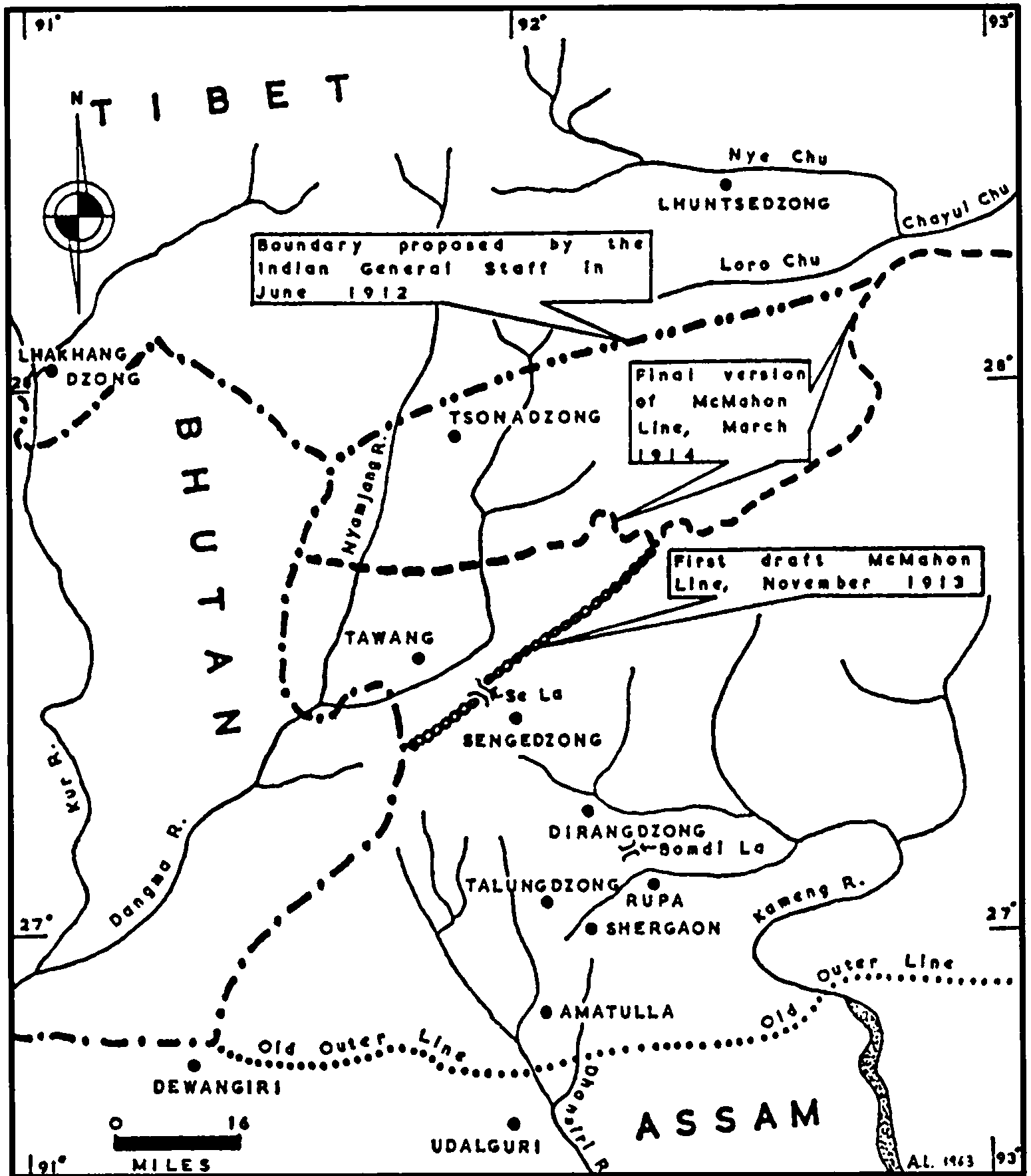
[Editor's note: footnote numbers have been adjusted.]

- 1 *White Paper II*, p. 40, Nehru to Chou En-lai, 26 September 1959.
- 2 K. Gopalachari, 'The India-China Boundary Question', *International Studies*, V, nos. 1-2, July-October 1963, p. 42.
See also P. G. Chakravarti, *India's China Policy*, Bloomington, Indiana, 1962, p. 137.
- 3 See p. 336 above.
- 4 A reference to Major Graham's demarcation of the foothill line in the 1870s. See p. 301 above.
- 5 PEF 1910/14, no. 3057/12, General Staff Note on the N. E. Frontier, 1 June 1912.
{Editor's Note: Lambs references to primary sources have been rendered obsolete by changes in the filing system of the Oriental and India Office Library}.
- 6 PEF 1913/18, no. 4692/13, Memo. by McMahon, 28 October 1913.
- 7 PEF 1913/18, no. 4790/13, Viceroy to Secretary of State, 21 November 1913.
- 8 PEF 1913/19, no. 461/14, McMahon to Hirtzel, 22 January 1914.
- 9 PEF 1913/19, no. 893/14, McMahon to Hirtzel, 19 February 1914.
- 10 FO 535/16, no. 449, Viceroy to Secretary of State, 26 November 1913.
- 11 F. M. Bailey, *Report on an Exploration on the North-east Frontier 1913*, Simla 1914, pp. 13-14.
- 12 *Memorandum*.
- 13 Bailey, *Report*, *op. cit.*, pp. 10-12. See also p. 322 above.
- 14 FO 535/16, no. 422, Assam to India, 17 October 1913. See also Bailey, *Report*, *op. cit.*
- 15 Bailey, *Report*, *op. cit.*; F. M. Bailey, *No Passport to Tibet*, London 1957; C. P. Gunter, *Report of the Mishmi Exploration Survey Detachment, 1912-1913*, in S. G. Burrard, *Records of the Survey of India IV*, Calcutta, 1914.
- 16 FO 371/1613, no. 53461, India Office to Foreign Office, 24 November 1913.
- 17 FO 533/16, no. 422, Assam to India, 17 September 1913.
- 18 PEF 1913/18, no. 4790/13, Viceroy to Secretary of State, 21 November 1913.
- 19 PEF 1913/28, no. 1918/14, O'Callaghan's Tour Diary, 7 March 1914.
- 20 *Loc. cit.*
- 21 Reid, Sir R., *History of the Frontier Areas Bordering on Assam from 1883-1941*, Shillong, 1941, p. 250.
- 22 In the period of the Assam Himalayan explorations following Williamson's death the British came to regard the Talok (or Diphu) Pass as one of the fixed points in their universe, marking the divide between the Brahmaputra river system in India and the Irrawaddy system in Burma. The Talok or Diphu Pass, however, was also seen to be a potential gateway into the extreme north-west of Burma from Tibet, a gateway which the Indian Government resolved to deny to China should the Chinese ever again be in a position to exploit it. The decision to run the McMahon Line along the north of the Di Chu stream was a product of this resolve. It also meant that the McMahon Line did not, in fact, actually run through the summit of the Talok or Diphu Pass but followed a crest a few miles northwards.

In the Sino-Burmese border agreement of 1 October 1960 the Diphu Pass was accepted as being actually on the boundary line and was the western extremity of the line as then agreed upon (though the Chinese refused to admit that this meant that in their view the Diphu or Talok Pass was the China-India-Burma trijunction point – to do so, of course, would have implied some acceptance of the McMahon Line as a Sino-Indian boundary). The Indian Government delivered a number of protests against the location of the new Sino-Burmese border at the Talok or Diphu Pass, protests which the Chinese had no difficulty in dismissing. See *White Paper*, V, p. 20, Indian note of 30 December 1960.

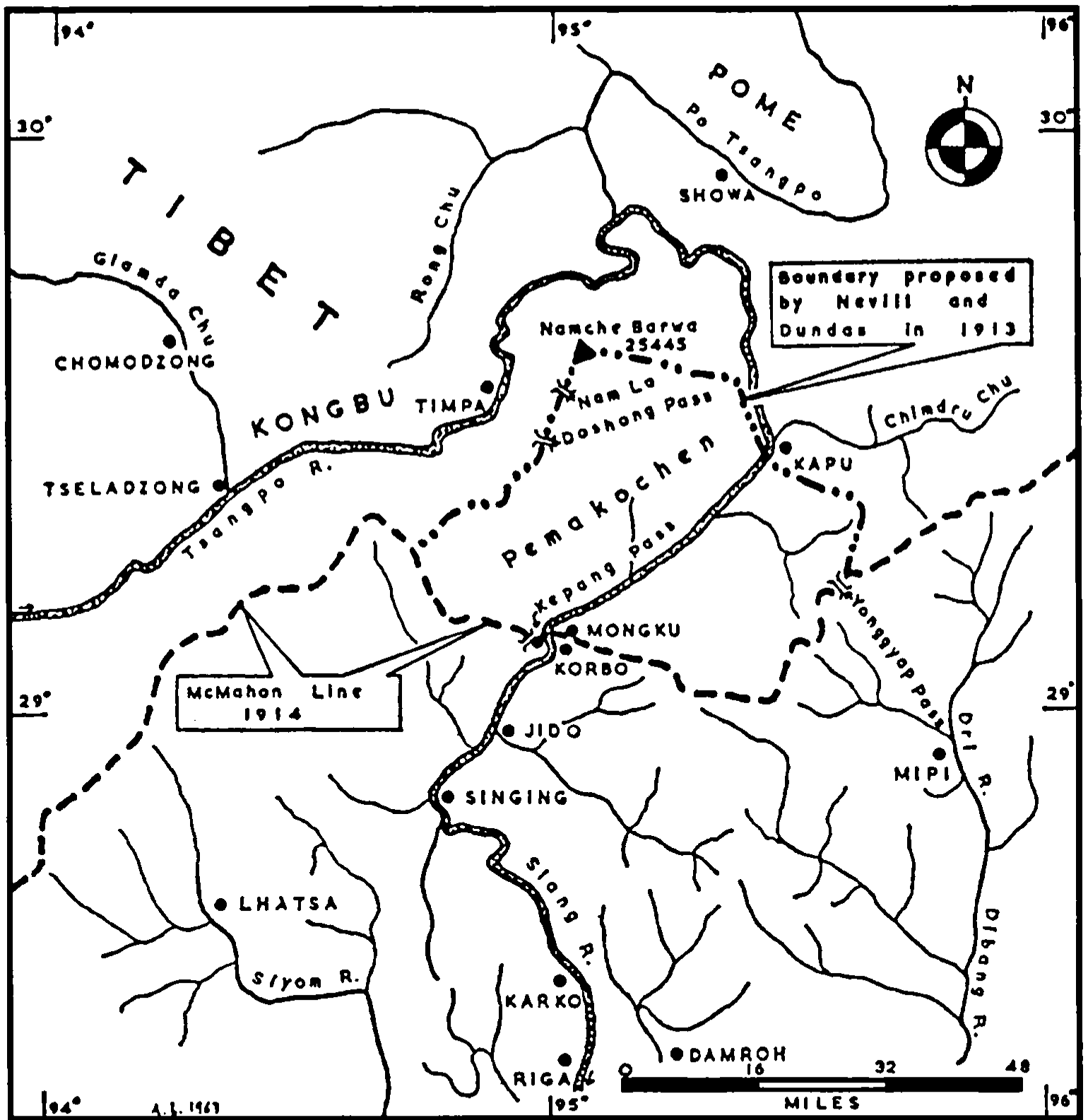
- 23 B. E. A. Pritchard and F. G. Waterfield, *Report on a Journey . . . on the North-East Frontier*, 1912-13, Simla, 1913. See also Bailey, F. M. *China, Tibet, Assam. A Journey*, London 1945, and B. E. A. Pritchard, 'A journey from Myitkyina to Sadiya via the N'maikha and Hkamti Long', *Geographical Journal*, XLIII, 1914.
- 24 PEF 1913/18, no. 4790/13, Viceroy to Secretary of State, 21 November 1913.
- 25 Appendix XVI.
- 26 The notes were first published in the 1929 edition of Aitchison's *Treaties*. At least, this is what is generally said. Mr. John Addis, however, informs me that there were two versions of the 1929 Aitchison's *Treaties*, one containing the text of the McMahon Line notes and the Simla Convention, and the other without these documents. Mr. Addis believes that these texts were inserted into the Aitchison collection at a date later than 1929, and that a new volume was substituted for the original volume which omitted these texts. The original 1929 volume, of which Mr. Addis saw a copy at Harvard University, not only leaves out the texts of the McMahon Line notes and the Simla Convention, but also states that the Simla Conference produced no valid agreements. In the revised volume, which is to be found in most English libraries, there is a clear implication that the McMahon Line notes and the July text of the Simla Convention are agreements binding in International law. Mr. Addis has discussed this question at length in his *The India-China Border Question*, privately circulated by the Centre for International Affairs, Harvard University, in February 1963. I am much indebted to Mr. Addis both for sending me a copy of this fascinating work and for allowing me to make a reference to it here.
- 27 The only account of the McMahon Line negotiations which I could find in the Foreign Office and India Office archives was a memorandum by McMahon of 23 March 1914, which he later incorporated in his *Memorandum*. See FO 535/17, no. 91. This document has very little information on what actually took place during the Bell-Lönchen Shatra discussions.
- 28 A slightly earlier version of the map *North East Frontier of India*, Provisional Issue, General Staff India, SDO no. 741, than that on which the McMahon Line was drawn can be seen in the Foreign Office Map Room, no. 17144. This is dated August 1913 for Sheets I and II and September 1913 for Sheets III and IV (which do not relate to the McMahon Line, covering Eastern Tibet), while the McMahon Line map is dated February 1914. Between these two issues an appreciable amount of fresh information has been added. The contrast, moreover, between the earliest edition of SDO no. 741 and previous maps in respect of detail and accuracy is astounding. See, for example *The North East Frontier of India*, SDO no. 81 of July 1911, at a somewhat smaller scale to SDO no. 741 (FO Map Room no. 17090); *The North East Frontier of India*, specially prepared for the Chief of General Staff, and published under the direction of Colonel S. G. Burrard, R. E., F. R. S., Offg. Surveyor-General of India, 1910, at a scale of thirty-two miles to the inch (FO Map Room no. 17024); *Map of China*, GSGS no. 2631a, War Office, August 1908 (in FO 371/620, no. 886); *Tibet and the Surrounding Regions*, published by the Royal Geographical Society, corrected 1906, at a scale of sixty miles to the inch (FO Map Room no. 17016). All these maps not only compare most unfavourably in detail and accuracy with SDO no. 741, but also show boundaries in the Assam Himalayas following very different alignments from the McMahon Line. None include the Tawang Tract within India, and the War Office map GSGS no. 2631a shows the old Outer Line foothill boundary. It cannot be maintained, after a careful study of British maps of the period 1904-14, that the McMahon Line had become a cartographical feature before the Simla Conference.
- 29 FO 535/17, no. 91, Memo. by McMahon, 28 March 1914.
- 30 See Lamb, *McMahon Line*, p. 487, note, above.

- 31 Bell and the Lönchen Shatra seem to have had *some* discussion on other sections of the Indo-Tibetan border after the McMahon Line notes had been exchanged. See India, Ministry of External Affairs, *Report of Officials of the Governments of India and the People's Republic of China on the Boundary Question*, New Delhi, 1961, p. 84.
- 32 *BQ*, pp. 17–18.
- 33 FO 371/1613, no. 53461, India Office to Foreign Office, 24 November 1913; PEF 1913/18, no. 4768/13, Memo. by McMahon, 6 November 1913; FO 371/1929, no. 6603, India Office to Foreign Office, 12 February 1914.
- 34 The text of this note, along with some account of its history and consequences, is to be found in Lamb, *The China-India Border: the origins of the disputed boundaries*, Royal Institute of International Affairs, London, 1964.
- 35 PEF 1912/82, no. 1227/07, Dane to Ritchie, 3 April 1907.
- 36 Some of these points, and the first drafts of these maps, were presented to the Asian History Conference of September 1964 at the University of Hong Kong in a paper by Alastair Lamb entitled *A note on a problem of boundary definition in Ladakh*.
It is interesting that here, as in the case of the McMahon Line, some of the Chinese boundaries advanced during the Simla Conference ran south of the extremity of the red line. The early Chinese claim line, for example, crosses the Karakash below Kizil Jilga, implying that Sinkiang territory extended to that point and that south of it lay Tibet. The adjustment on the final Convention map, therefore, is tantamount to a transfer of some of Sinkiang Aksai Chin to Tibet; which, it has been suggested, was indeed the intention of the British delegation at the Conference. See PEF 1913/20, no. 2653/14, Jordan to Grey, 16 June 1914, with attached a sketch map showing various boundary alignments proposed during the course of the Simla Conference.
- 37 See, for example, K. K. Rao, 'The Sino-Indian Boundary Question and International Law', *International and Comparative Law Quarterly*, April 1962; L. C. Green, 'Legal Aspects of the Sino-Indian Border Dispute', *China Quarterly*, no. 3, July–September 1960.
- 38 Sir O. Caroe, 'The Sino-Indian question', *Royal Central Asian Journal*, July–October 1963; Sir O. Caroe, 'The Sino-Indian Frontier Dispute', *Asian Review*, April 1963.
The map in question has been published in India, Ministry of External Affairs, *Atlas of the Northern Frontier of India*, New Delhi, 1961.
- 39 FO 535/18, no. 44.
- 40 Reid, *Assam Frontier*, *op. cit.*, pp. 283–7; PEF 1913/28, no. 3461/14, Nevill to Assam, 21 June 1914, enclosing diary of a visit to Tawang.
- 41 During the course of the first nine months or so of 1914 the Assam Government made a number of proposals for administrative activities in the Assam Himalayas right up to the new McMahon Line. Apart from Nevill's ideas about Tawang, there were Dundas's plans to push posts up the Dihang-Siang as far, eventually, as Karko, and there was the project for a post up the Lohit at Menilkrai linked to Sadiya by a carriage road. On 12 November 1914, however, Hardinge informed the Assam Government that he had 'decided to take no further action on your proposals until the grave preoccupations of the war have passed'. PEF 1913/28, no. 4745/14, India to Assam, 12 November 1914, and India Office minute, 7 December 1914.
- 42 The British members of the Kashmir Boundary Commissions of 1846 and 1847 appear to have considered the watershed principle as valuable in boundary making in mountainous tracts; but it must be admitted that they achieved no great success in creating a watershed boundary in what has now become known as the Western Sector of the Sino-Indian boundary dispute. See Lamb, *A. Britain and Chinese Central Asia: the Road to Lhasa 1767–1905*, London 1960, p. 81.
- 43 *White Paper*, VIII, pp. 10–17, Nehru to Chou En-lai, 14 November 1962 and annexure.
- 44 K. K. Rao, 'The Sino-Indian Boundary Question and International Law', *International and Comparative Law Quarterly*, 1962, pp. 405 *et seq.* Mr. Rao states that 'it is universally accepted that, where a mountain range forms the boundary, the watershed constitutes the frontier, failing special treaty arrangements'. This may well be so: but, in the case of the Assam Himalayas, the question remains which watershed? Excessive emphasis on the abstract watershed principle, to which Indian observers tend, would seem rather to obscure the issues.



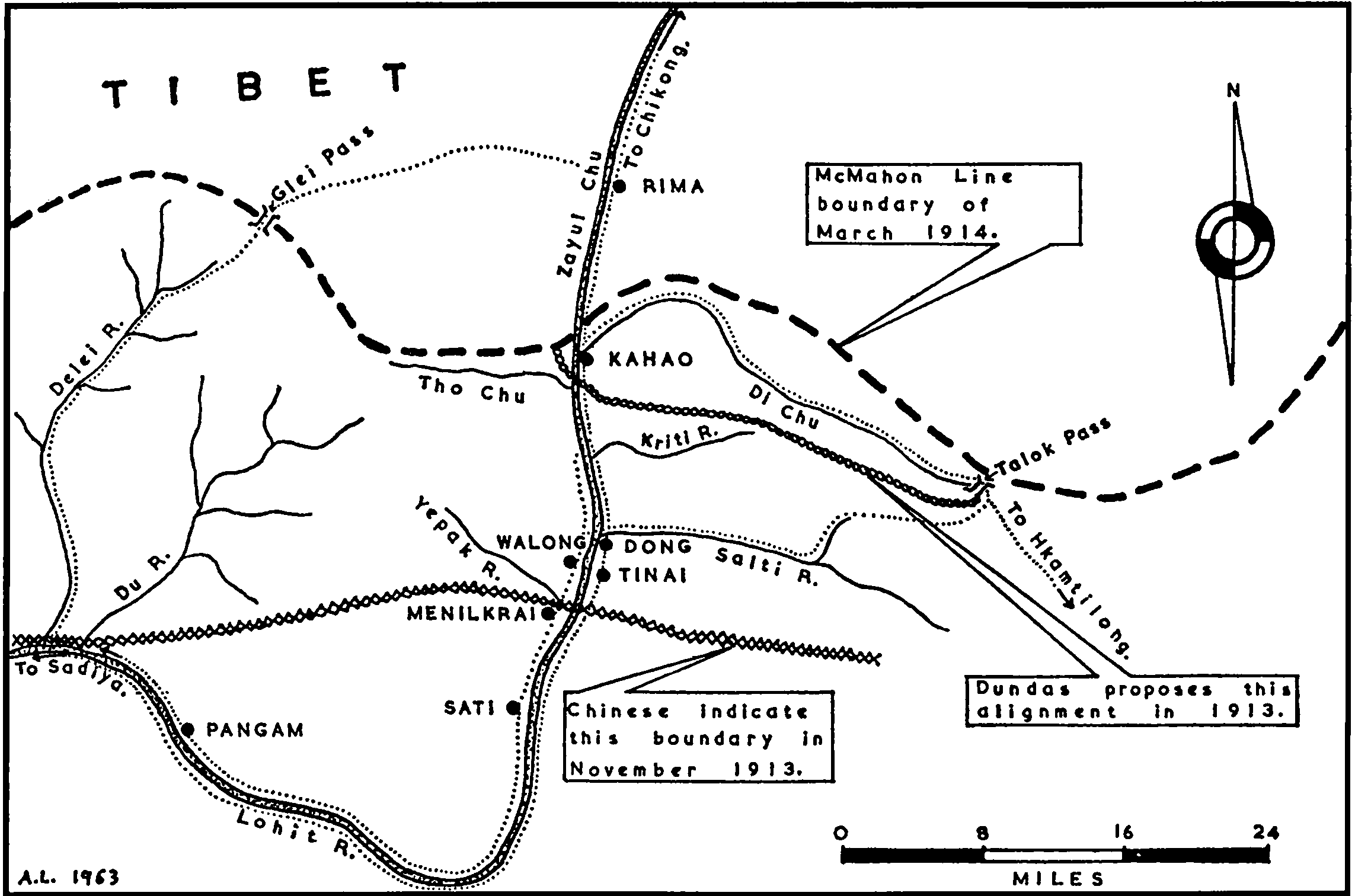
16 *McMahon Line proposals along the Tawang Tract*

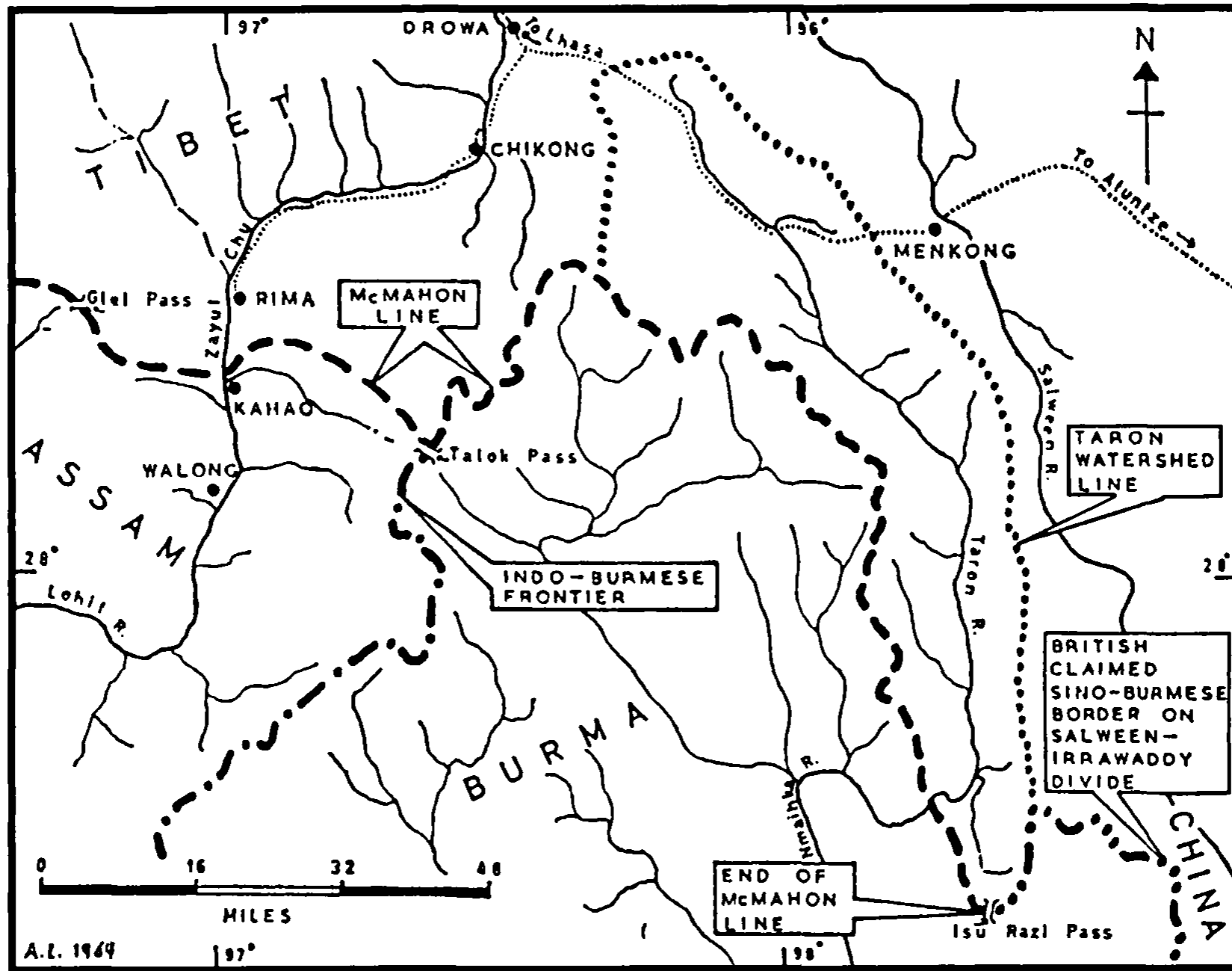
THE 'MCMAHON LINE



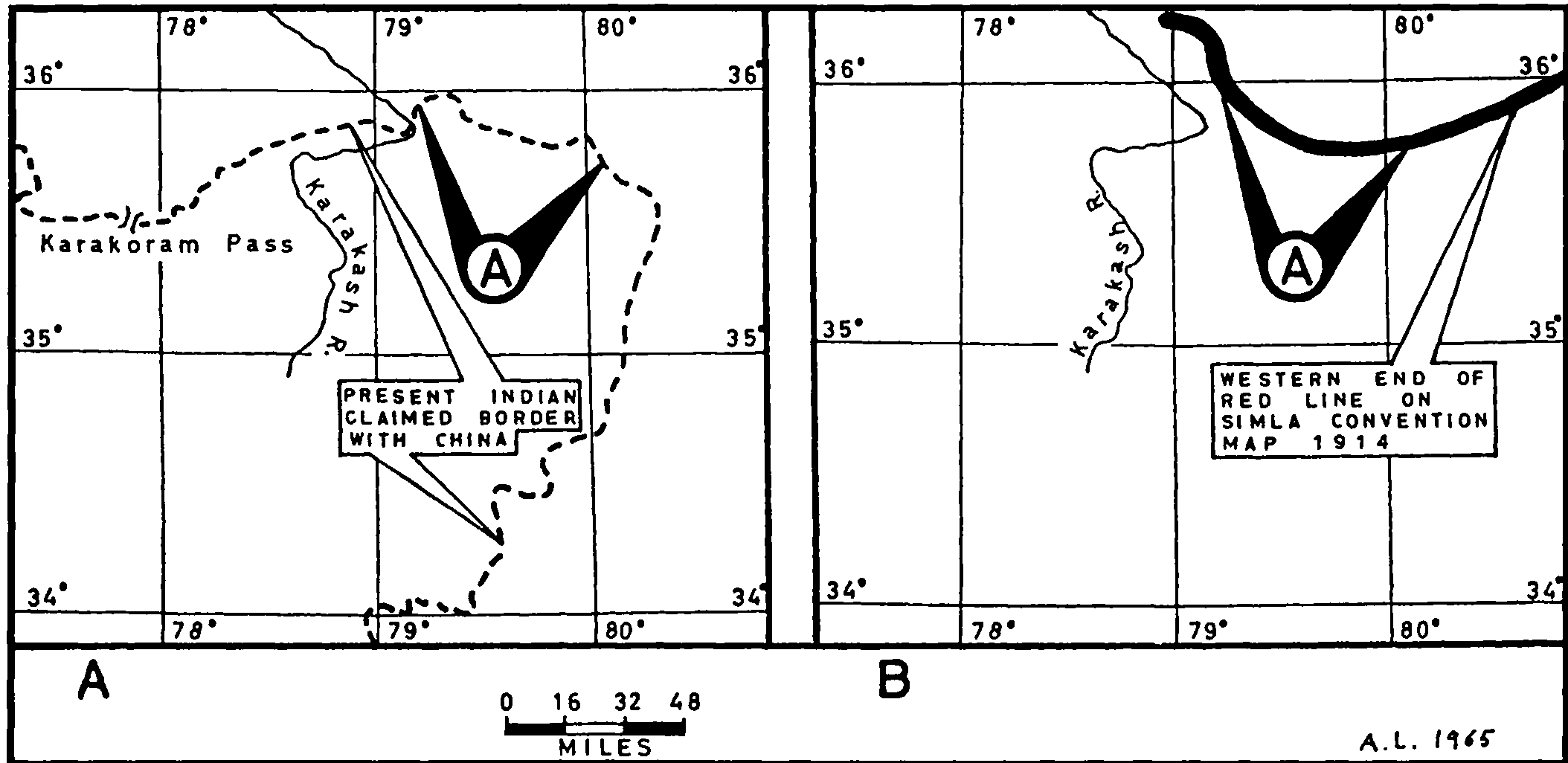
17 McMahon Line proposals on the Dihang-Siang

TIBET

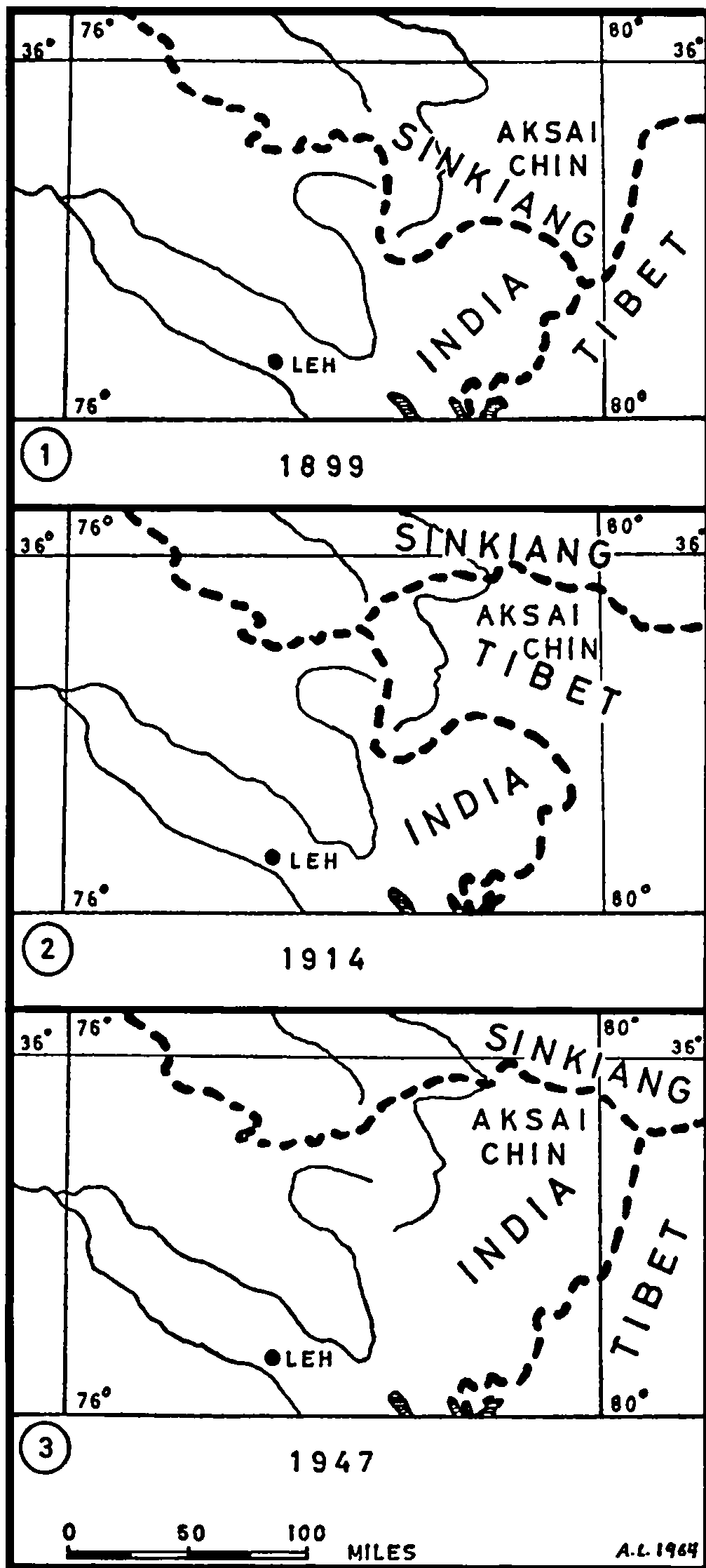




19 McMahon Line proposals on the Taron



21 The western end of the red line on the Simla Convention map compared with the present boundary claimed by India in the Aksai Chin region



22 *Boundary changes in the Aksai Chin area, 1899-1947*

THE SITUATION IN 1914

Alastair Lamb

Source: A. Lamb, "Introduction", *Tibet, China & India 1914–1950: A History of Imperial Diplomacy*, Hertingfordbury: Roxford Books, 1989, pp. 1–27.

In 1912 Central Tibet (that is to say the region dominated by the Provinces of Ü and Tsang) became effectively independent of all Chinese control for the first time since the early 18th century. In 1950–1951 the Chinese returned to bring this brief era to an end; and after 1959 under Chinese rule the remnants of the old Tibetan civilisation were destroyed beyond reasonable hope of reconstruction. The period of *de facto* Tibetan independence coincided almost exactly with the life of the first Chinese Republic, whose birth in fact made it possible. It was also roughly contemporary with the final years of British rule in India during which the transfer of power from London to the Indian people evolved from a hope into a promise fulfilled. The interaction between British policy in the last decades of British Empire in the Indian subcontinent and the aspirations of the various components of Tibetan political society against a background of a weak and divided China is the subject of this book.

From the British point of view the story of Indo-Tibetan relations comes to a natural conclusion in August 1947, with a brief postscript extending to 1950. For the successors to the British in India, of course, and for the Tibetans themselves, there was no convenient end. They had to face, as the British never did, the presence in Tibet of the power of the People's Republic of China, the most formidable Chinese regime since at least the great days of the Ch'ing Dynasty in the 18th century. The British themselves were now spectators; but the drama that they were watching from afar was to a great extent couched in a language and concerned with issues which had their origins in that age when the sun never set upon their Empire. It is indeed difficult to comprehend the current situation in Tibet and its place in the policy of both the People's Republic of China and the Republic of India without a reasonable understanding of what went on in the British period. The British do bear some responsibility for the present tragedy of Tibet, even though there might have been little that they could have done to avert it.

The British authorities in India from the days of Lord Clive had appreciated that to the north of their dominions, initially Bengal and eventually the entire subcontinent, there existed a formidable mountain barrier, the Himalayas, beyond which lay Tibet. It was believed that Tibet was in some way part of the Chinese Empire. During the administration of Warren Hastings (1772–1785) a series of attempts were made to establish contact with the dominant figure in Tibetan affairs at that time, the 6th

Panchen Lama (or Tashi Lama), in the hope that he might act as some kind of intermediary between the East India Company and the Chinese Emperor in Peking who had shown a distressing reluctance to enter into any kind of direct diplomatic contact with the British commercial establishment at Canton on the South China coast.¹ For a variety of reasons this initiative failed to yield any dividends despite the despatch of British Missions to the Panchen Lama's capital at Tashilhunpo (near Shigatse); but the conviction that in some manner Tibet was a diplomatic route to China persisted until the middle of the 19th century.²

In the 1860s the British situation vis à vis China had changed dramatically. By force of arms the British, along with the other Powers, had managed to open a direct relationship with the rulers of China in Peking. Tibet, meanwhile, which once had been willing to enter into correspondence with and accept envoys from the rulers of British India, now showed a desire for nothing but isolation. Tibetan xenophobia had, indeed, already been apparent for many years to those British officials who had to deal with the growing extent of common Anglo-Tibetan border, first created by the British annexations following the Anglo-Nepalese War of 1814-1816 and then by the establishment in the late 1840s of British protection over the Dogra State of Jammu and Kashmir. It became a subject of particular Government concern following, in 1861, the extension of British control over the small Himalayan State of Sikkim after a minor military operation.

The newly created Anglo-Tibetan border in Sikkim appeared to many observers to offer an ideal route by which British trade could penetrate the markets of Chinese Central Asia from Calcutta, the major port and centre of commerce as well as the capital of British India. There were also political arguments arising from the nature of British relations with the Himalayan States of Nepal and Bhutan, between them, together with Sikkim, occupying a considerable length of Himalayan frontier tract and with their own tradition of relationships with Tibet, which indicated the wisdom of establishing some kind of dialogue with the powers that be to their north. During the 1860s, accordingly, a variety of projects were examined in London and in India for the despatch of some kind of diplomatic and commercial mission to the Tibetan capital, Lhasa.

From the outset it became apparent that a major problem lay in the nature of Tibet's international status. Was Tibet part of China? Neither the Tibetans nor the Chinese were willing to provide a satisfactory answer to this question. The Tibetans indicated that they could have no direct dealings with foreigners without Chinese consent. The Chinese, on the other hand, maintained that any attempt they might make to open Tibet to external influences would only be resisted by the Tibetans. It was known that there were Chinese representatives in Lhasa, the Amban and his Deputy, who exercised some kind of authority; but it was not clear exactly what their powers were. The Government of India would have on the whole preferred to try to establish their own relationship with Tibet without any reference to the Chinese. The view both in London and in the British Legation in Peking, however, was that it would be as well not to ignore the Chinese in the interests of the wider pattern of Anglo-Chinese diplomacy. Had the Tibetans shown any willingness at all to begin a dialogue with the Government of India it is probable that local Indo-Tibetan contacts would have in the fullness of time expanded into a more elaborate relationship; but the Tibetans manifested no signs whatsoever that on their own they would ever do more than offer polite rejections to British overtures on the frontier.

The wall of obstruction was cracked, but not dismantled, in 1876 by the British Minister in Peking, Sir Thomas Wade. As part of a package of reparations offered by the Chinese Government following one of those "incidents" which figured so prominently in China's relations with the Powers in the 19th century, in this instance the killing of a British official on the Chinese side of the Burma-Yunnan border, the Chinese agreed to the inclusion in the Chefoo Convention of 13 September 1876 of the following clause (as a Separate Article):

Her Majesty's Government having it in contemplation to send a mission of exploration next year by way of Peking through Kansu and Koko-Nor, or by way of Ssu-Ch'uan to Tibet, and thence to India, the Tsungli Yamen . . . [the Chinese Foreign Office of the day] . . . having due regard to the circumstances, will, when the time arrives, issue the necessary passports, and will address letters to the high provincial authorities and to the Resident in Tibet. If the Mission should not be sent by these routes, but should be proceeding across the Indian frontier to Tibet, the Tsungli Yamen, on receipt of a communication to the above effect from the British Minister, will write to the Chinese Resident in Tibet, and the Resident, with due regard to the circumstances, will send officers to take due care of the Mission; and the passports for the Mission will be issued by the Tsungli Yamen, that its passage be not obstructed.³

While these words indicated clearly enough that the Chinese had the right to issue passports for Tibet, yet there was also a stated reservation ("due regard to the circumstances") suggesting that a local factor had to be taken into account which was not under the direct control of Peking. The Chefoo Convention, therefore, while committing the British to attempt to conduct any Tibetan policy through or in co-operation with China, yet provided no guarantee that with the best will in the world the Chinese would be able in practice to open Tibet to British diplomacy.

No attempt was made to exploit the Separate Article of the Chefoo Convention until 1885 when a British Mission to Tibet was proposed by the Government of India, to be led by Colman Macaulay, Financial Secretary to the Government of Bengal. Macaulay, who had talked with Tibetan officials on the Sikkim-Tibet border and concluded that his presence in Lhasa would be welcome, went to Peking to collect his Chinese passports amidst great publicity. A number of British Chambers of Commerce, attracted by the prospects of Tibet as a source of wool, enthusiastically supported the project. There was also considerable interest in India in Macaulay's argument that Tibet would be an excellent market for Indian tea.⁴ The Chinese granted the passports; but they also took advantage of the "due regard to circumstances" escape clause. As the Macaulay Mission assembled in Darjeeling in early 1886 the Chinese began to report to the British Legation in Peking that there were increasing signs of active Tibetan opposition to it.

Sir Nicholas O'Connor, the British Minister in Peking, who was not too enthusiastic about Macaulay's scheme, decided that these reports could not be disregarded. Rather than face the prospect of a clash between the Macaulay Mission and Tibetan troops, which could well lead to a most unwelcome trans-frontier campaign and a grave crisis in Anglo-Chinese relations, O'Connor was happy to negotiate the Mission away in

exchange for a Chinese settlement of some outstanding difficulties which had arisen as a result of the recent British annexation of Upper Burma, which the Chinese claimed possessed some form of tributary relationship to the Manchu Dynasty. In Article IV of the Anglo-Chinese Convention "relative to Burmah and Thibet" of 24 July 1886, it was agreed that:

inasmuch as enquiry into the circumstances by the Chinese Government has shown the existence of many obstacle to the Mission to Thibet provided for in the Separate Article of the Chefoo Agreement, England consents to countermand the Mission forthwith.

With regard to the desire of the British Government to consider arrangements for further trade between India and Thibet, it will be the duty of the Chinese Government, after careful enquiry into circumstances, to adopt measures to exhort and encourage the people with a view to the promotion and development of trade. Should it be practicable, the Chinese Government shall then proceed carefully to consider Trade Regulations; but if insuperable obstacles should be found to exist, the British Government will not press the matter unduly.⁵

The ball was now very much in the Chinese court; and they showed no signs whatsoever of wishing to play it. As far as they were concerned, circumstances never would be "practicable". At this juncture, however, they rather lost control over the situation. The Tibetans, alarmed by reports of the impending advance into their country of the Macaulay Mission with a substantial escort, sent a body of armed men across the border a few miles into Sikkim to take up a position in an old fort at Lingtu overlooking the route which the British party would probably follow.

The Tibetans at Lingtu refused to withdraw even when instructed by the Chinese to do so. They declared that Sikkim was subject to Tibet and that they had every right to be where they were. After the failure over more than a year of attempts by the British Legation in Peking to secure any practical assistance from the Chinese Government, some of whose officials admitted privately that the influence of Peking over Lhasa was slight, the Government of India decided to drive the Tibetans out of British protected territory by force of arms. In March 1888 an expedition some 2,000 strong duly expelled the Tibetans, who retreated across the frontier passes. It looked for a while as if the Tibetans would try to return in greater strength, and the situation in Sikkim remained tense. At the very end of 1888 the Amban in Lhasa turned up on the border to see for himself what was happening and to talk with the British on the other side.

The Amban, when the Indian Foreign Secretary Sir Mortimer Durand went up to the border to meet him, maintained that the Chinese were alone responsible for the affairs of Tibet, which was an integral part of China. Sikkim, moreover, was a dependency of Tibet and therefore also under Chinese supervision. From these rather unpromising premises both the Amban and his superiors in Peking were eventually moved after considerable argument to accept that Sikkim was now indeed under British protection and that the border between it and Tibet ought to be properly defined. The Sikkim-Tibet Convention of 17 March 1890, signed in Calcutta by the Amban Sheng Tai and the Viceroy Lord Lansdowne, was the outcome of these proceedings. It made clear the status of Sikkim as a British protectorate, laid down

the principles for the alignment of the Sikkim-Tibet border, and provided for further Anglo-Chinese negotiations over the future mechanisms for the conduct of trade and official communication between British India and what was accepted as Chinese Tibet.⁶

The Sikkim-Tibet Convention was negotiated between the British and the Chinese without any Tibetan participation; and it established a precedent which was followed by the Trade Regulations of 5 December 1893 which provided for the creation of a Trade Mart at Yatung, just across the border from Sikkim in the Chumbi Valley on the main road to Lhasa, where traders from both Tibet and British India now had a treaty right to visit without obstruction.⁷ There would be no duty on goods between India and Tibet (except for a few specified items which could, indeed, be prohibited) for the next five years, when a scheme of tariffs would be worked out jointly by the British and the Chinese.

So far it looked as if direct Anglo-Chinese negotiations were beginning to open up Tibet in a satisfactory manner. It soon became clear to officials of the Government of India, however, that this was far from being the case. The Tibetans showed every sign of repudiating the Anglo-Chinese agreements of 1890 and 1893. They imposed a tariff of 10% *ad valorem* on all goods passing to and from the Yatung Trade Mart through Phari at the head of the Chumbi Valley in blatant disregard of the Trade Regulations. When the British tried to demarcate the border outlined in the 1890 Convention by means of an Anglo-Chinese commission with Tibetan participation, they found that the Tibetans refused to take part. Thereupon the Chinese also withdrew. The British official involved, J. C. White (Political Officer in Sikkim), then went ahead on his own and erected a number of pillars at boundary points on the main passes between Sikkim and Tibet. The pillars were promptly defaced or removed by persons unknown, presumably Tibetans. Apart from the Phari duties, physical obstacles to the free movement of trade in the shape of stone walls were put up across the road in the Chumbi Valley immediately to the north of Yatung. Finally, the British discovered that in the extreme north of Sikkim, but definitely to the south of the line specified in the 1890 Convention, the Tibetans had established a military post at an isolated spot called Giaogong (or Giagong).

The British officials responsible for the administration of the newly defined Sikkim-Tibet border and the Yatung Trade Mart soon concluded that the Chinese were quite unable to oblige the Tibetans to comply with the agreements they had made on their behalf. They urged a more forceful approach in which pressure would be exerted directly on the Tibetans; and the Chinese, whose role was seen to be little more than a farce, they argued should henceforth be ignored. The Government of India, now under the supervision of Lord Elgin, were inclined to leave things as they were. Elgin did not believe that the commercial advantages of the Tibet trade warranted even a minor crisis in Anglo-Chinese relations.

In 1899 Lord Elgin was replaced by Lord Curzon as Viceroy and the policy of benign neglect of events on the Sikkim-Tibet border was abandoned. This was not, it must be admitted, entirely due to Curzon's own approach to frontier matters. In c.1895 the 13th Dalai Lama took over the reins of power in Lhasa, the first Dalai Lama to reach maturity since the very beginning of the century. Nearly a hundred years of corrupt and complacent Regency rule came to an end. The Tibetan opposition to the Yatung Trade Mart and the demarcation of the Sikkim-Tibet border was

most probably a product of this development which had resulted in a rebirth of a sense of Tibetan independence and an acute dislike of direct Chinese influence.

The new Tibetan approach to its own status was manifested in three main directions. First: there was a deliberate refusal to co-operate with the Chinese in their dealings with the Government of India relating to Tibet. Second: there was the emergence of what only can be called Lhasa chauvinism in eastern Tibet (Kham) where many Tibetan states were either to all intents and purposes independent or existed as Chinese protectorates. This Lhasa attitude towards Kham can be traced back to the middle of the 19th century; but it acquired a new intensity with the arrival of an adult Dalai Lama at the helm. One of his objectives was to bring the most easterly of all the Tibetan states, Chala (Jala), which was also one of those under the greatest degree of Chinese influence, under his control. Third: the 13th Dalai Lama began to look for some great Power who would support him against what he perceived as the two major threats of his time, the Chinese and the British Government of India. He turned to Russia.

The detailed history of the involvement of the 13th Dalai Lama with the Tsarist Empire is still little understood. At one time it was fashionable to deny its reality. Russo-Tibetan intrigues were dismissed as figments of Lord Curzon's paranoid imagination. Today such a view would not be easy to sustain. Yet we still possess all too little information about the Russian side of the story on which the archives in Soviet care must surely be able to throw some light. The key figure in the connection between Lhasa and St. Petersburg was Aghvan Dorjiev, a Buriat Mongol Buddhist monk of outstanding ability and scholarship who apparently established himself in the Tibetan capital in or before 1895 and soon gained the friendship and trust of the young 13th Dalai Lama. Dorjiev was but one of a considerable number of Buriats visiting or residing in Lhasa at this time, and we only know the names of a few of them. It seems, however, that he was their leader in terms of the respect which he enjoyed, though some of these Buriats (and other Mongol subjects of the Tsar) possessed Russian official rank or position which Dorjiev apparently did not.⁸

One may conclude that Dorjiev explained to the 13th Dalai Lama that, faced with pressure both from China and British India, there was but one direction towards which he could look for help, St. Petersburg. The Dalai Lama duly permitted a correspondence to develop between himself and Tsar Nicholas II which may have produced more than an exchange of compliments; but we cannot be certain. Was there some kind of Russo-Tibetan treaty? What we do know is that in 1899 reports of diplomatic contact between Lhasa and the Russians began to appear in the European and British Indian press; and by 1900 quite precise details had emerged. In October 1900, for example, the *Journal de St. Petersburg* announced the arrival in Livadia (at the Imperial residence in the Crimea) of a mission from the Dalai Lama headed by one "Ahambra-Agvan-Dorjiev"; and from then on the Russian press continued to report Tibetan comings and goings. It also transpired after investigation by the agents of internal security in British India, who seem to have been singularly inefficient, that some of these journeys between Tibet and Russia by Dorjiev and his friends had involved transits of British Indian territory and the use of British Indian ports.

Lord Curzon was furious not only because of these lapses in his own intelligence arrangements but also because, try as he would, he could find no way to get in touch himself with the 13th Dalai Lama. When he did find a means of delivery of a letter,

it was returned to him unopened. Lord Curzon, before being appointed Viceroy, had acquired considerable first hand experience of Anglo-Russian competition in Central Asia; and he possessed very strong views on the subject. The British, he felt, should not be seen to allow the Russians to extend their influence in any way into those parts of the world which fell within the British sphere. Give the Russian an inch and they would take a mile. Something must be done.

In the end Lord Curzon, with the active collaboration of Francis Younghusband, an officer in the Indian Political Service who possessed experience of British Imperial adventure in South Africa as well as in Asia, devised a scheme by which the situation on the Sikkim-Tibet border would be exploited to provide a justification of sorts for the despatch of a formidable British Mission (eventually to acquire a military escort of more than brigade strength under the command of Brigadier-General Macdonald) to Lhasa to force the Dalai Lama to enter into some kind of dialogue with the Indian Empire.⁹ The Younghusband Expedition was duly mounted in 1903; and in August 1904 as the result of a process of controlled escalation it entered Lhasa after a contested passage from the Sikkim border which had resulted in large numbers of Tibetans being killed or wounded. The Dalai Lama had fled his capital before the British arrival.

In terms of British political advantage the Younghusband Expedition was not a success. It provided an opportunity for Russian protest which was so skillfully exploited that the British were eventually forced more or less to surrender any claim to the right of direct action in Tibet. It is hard to avoid the suspicion that the considerable publicity given by the official Russian press to the travels of Dorjiev was intended to provoke the British into just such a move. By premature action in Tibet the British had really given the Russians a powerful bargaining card which they could exploit for all sorts of possible exchanges. Tibet was thus manipulated by Tsarist diplomatists to help shape the Anglo-Russian Convention of 1907 which was to shackle British policy towards the country beyond the Himalayas for more than a decade. The Younghusband Expedition created a situation which enabled the Russians to prevent the establishment of an equivalence between British interests in Tibet and those of Russia in Mongolia, with the end result that Russia acquired a free hand in Mongolia while the British, after 1907, could hardly make a gesture towards Tibet without having to think about paying off the Russians with concessions in Afghanistan or, even, the eastern Mediterranean.

In the very short term Younghusband acquired what amounted to a British protectorate over that territory under the control of Lhasa. It was, however, for a very brief period indeed because even as Younghusband was on his way back from Lhasa in September 1904 both in India and in London the British authorities were starting to dismantle the structure which he had tried to create. One achievement of Younghusband's treaty which he secured in Lhasa, the so called Lhasa Convention, survived in part in the shape of further Trade Marts opened at Gartok in Western Tibet and Gyantse on the road between Yatung and Lhasa. Other crucial provisions, however, including the right of a British official to visit Lhasa from time to time, were abandoned.¹⁰

With the repudiation of so many of the gains of the Younghusband Expedition it appeared to the Tibetan experts in the service of the Government of India (but not the British Government in London) that, with the British gone from the Tibetan capital

and the 13th Dalai Lama in exile, there was a power vacuum in Tibet into which the Chinese would inevitably be sucked; and subsequent events showed that this impression was correct. By a series of agreements, the Anglo-Chinese Convention of 1906, and the new Trade Regulations of 1908, the formal position of the Chinese in Tibet was permitted to be greatly reinforced. The Chinese officials at the Trade Marts were able to act in a way which the British considered to be seriously damaging to their prestige. At the same time, the Chinese under the dynamic leadership of one of the last great soldier-bureaucrats of the Manchu era, Chao Erh-feng, the "Warden of the Marches", that is to say the High Official in charge of the Szechuan-Tibet borderlands, proceeded by a sequence of conquests to extend Manchu direct control steadily towards Lhasa from the east. In early 1910 Chao Erh-feng sent a flying column to the Tibetan capital and the Dalai Lama, who had only just returned after his exile since 1904, was now obliged to flee again, this time to British India.

The Chinese occupation of Central Tibet presented the Government of India with what they saw as a most threatening situation. Would the Chinese challenge the influence of the British in Nepal and Bhutan? Would they try to undermine the security of a long Indo-Tibetan border which for most of its length had not been defined and for a considerable stretch followed an alignment which was far from ideal from a military point of view? Between 1910 and 1912 Chinese actions seemed to provide an affirmative answer to both these questions.

Of particular concern to the Government of India was evidence that the Chinese were seeking to penetrate the barrier of the Assam Himalayas and infiltrate down towards the edge of the plains of the Brahmaputra valley. The possibility could not be ignored. The murder in 1911 by tribesmen of a British official, Noël Williamson, while travelling in the hills of the Dihang or Siang valley a few miles to the north of what was then the international border of British India, usually referred to as the Outer Line, provided an opportunity for British action. Under the cover of punishing those responsible for Williamson's death, the British were able to mount a series of expeditions which effectively pushed the territorial limits of the Indian Empire deep into the mountains; but, of course, such activity did not in itself produce a new *de jure* international border.

No doubt, had the Chinese retained their position in Central Tibet there would in due course have been some excruciatingly difficult Anglo-Chinese negotiations concerning the line of demarcation between the two Empires. The British were saved, however, from this unpleasant prospect by the fall of the Manchu Dynasty in late 1911 which was followed quickly enough by the collapse of Chinese power in Lhasa.

In 1912 an extremely complex situation had developed. The Chinese, as a result of the history of Anglo-Chinese diplomacy over Tibet since at least the Chefoo Convention of 1876 (the Lhasa Convention of 1904 in this context being an aberration), had been acknowledged by the British as having a legitimate paramountcy over Tibet. Moreover, by the Anglo-Russian Convention of 1907 the British had agreed "not to enter into negotiations with Tibet except through the intermediary of the Chinese Government". Thus while the Chinese were no longer in effective control of Central Tibet (though pockets of their troops remained there awaiting evacuation), the British were prevented by the corpus of their previous treaty commitments from entering into direct discussions with the Dalai Lama without some kind of Chinese participation. The British recognition of full Tibetan independence, which some officials in the

service of the Government of India found attractive, was ruled out by the terms of the Anglo-Russian Convention of 1907. At the same time, the new state of affairs to the north of the Himalayan border could not be overlooked. Something had to be done about future relations between the Dalai Lama (now apparently a good British friend) and the Government of India. The new boundary in the Assam Himalayas urgently required regularisation. Some definition of a border between the new Tibet, whatever its theoretical status might be, and China had to be devised in order to guarantee that the Chinese did not return to disturb the peace of the Indian frontier. Sino-Tibetan fighting, or the possibility of such combat, so close to British territory ought to be terminated and the remaining Chinese troops sent back home.

When all the variables were analysed it was evident that there were two quite distinct issues. First: there was the question of the relationship of Tibet to China and the delimitation of some kind of border between that Tibet which was now to all intents and purposes free of direct Chinese influence and that which was not. In that fighting between Chinese and Tibetans was still going on in the east, this border could well assume the form of a cease-fire line. Second: there was the problem of the new alignment of what had become, *de facto* if not *de jure*, an Indo-Tibetan rather than a Sino-Indian border. The two issues could only be kept separate if the delimitation of the effective Sino-Tibetan border, irrespective of the theoretical status of Tibet, were so arranged as to keep territory actually still under Chinese control away from direct contact with the borders of British India. The Government of India were determined that this should come about.

In 1913 the new Chinese regime of Yuan Shih-k'ai was persuaded by the British Minister in Peking, Sir John Jordan, to send a representative to India to discuss with the Tibetans, the British acting both as honest brokers and as active participants, the nature of Sino-Tibetan relations and the whereabouts of the geographical line separating the rule of Lhasa from that of the successors to Chao Erh-feng (who had been killed during the Revolution) in the east. The Chinese were extremely reluctant to take part in such an exercise and Jordan had to exert considerable pressure upon them including scantily veiled threats that he might withhold desperately needed financial assistance, and, perhaps, even deny British recognition to the new Chinese Republic, before they would agree. The Chinese, moreover, were under the impression that if they did not participate the British would in all probability negotiate directly with the Tibetans without consulting them at all.

The Simla Conference, which lasted from October 1913 to July 1914, dealt with both issues indicated above. On the one hand the Chinese and Tibetan delegates, Chen I-fan (Ivan) and the Lönchen Shatra (the Dalai Lama's Chief Minister), with a great deal of prompting from the British delegation including Sir Henry McMahon, the Indian Foreign Secretary, and Charles Bell, the Political Officer in Sikkim who had established a close relationship with the Dalai Lama during his Indian exile, discussed at great length the future shape of Sino-Tibetan relations. On the other hand, and without any Chinese participation whatsoever, McMahon and Bell negotiated with the Lönchen Shatra the alignment of what seemed in the new circumstances to be a suitable Indo-Tibetan border in the Assam Himalayas, the so called McMahon Line.

The Sino-Tibetan discussions gave rise to the Simla Convention, a document which Chen I-fan initialled rather reluctantly in April 1914 and was then repudiated by Yuan Shih-k'ai's Government. It dealt with two major issues. First: it provided for a

Tibet (known as Outer Tibet) based on Lhasa which was to all intents and purposes autonomous though acknowledging Chinese "suzerainty". The direct Chinese presence here would be limited to a Resident in Lhasa with an escort of not more than 300 men. Second: it defined another Tibet (Inner Tibet) in which the Chinese position would be far more substantial though not spelled out in detail in the text of the Convention. A small scale (1 : 3,800,000) map appended to the Convention indicated the boundaries of Outer and Inner Tibet; and it was ostensibly over the alignment of these that the Chinese repudiated the Convention.¹¹

The separate Anglo-Tibetan discussions resulted in an exchange of notes between Sir Henry McMahon and the Lönchen Shatra dated 24 and 25 March 1914 which agreed to an Indo-Tibetan border, the McMahon Line, as indicated on an attached map in two sheets at a scale of 8 miles to the inch (1 : 500,000). The line was to some extent conditional; but its general alignment was clear enough. The McMahon-Lönchen Shatra notes were not communicated to the Chinese; and they constitute a transaction quite distinct from the Simla Convention.¹²

After the Chinese Government had rejected the April 1914 text of the Simla Convention the British, both in India and China, tried very hard indeed to induce them to change their minds. On 3 July 1914, after it had become obvious that the Chinese were adamant, the British and Tibetan delegates signed a Declaration to the effect that they would consider as binding the text of the Simla Convention (which had, in fact, been slightly altered since it had been installed by Chen I-fan in April), and that, until the Chinese signed this document they would be denied any benefits which it might confer upon them.¹³ At the same time the British and Tibetan delegates signed a fresh set of Trade Regulations to replace those of 1908. These, too, were not shown to the Chinese. The Conference then broke up.

The final stages of the Simla Conference took place in the beginning of July 1914. A month later the British Empire was at war. The problems of the North-East Frontier of India, let alone the borderland between Eastern Tibet and Szechuan Province in China, suddenly seemed of minor import; and it is not surprising that they ceased to occupy much attention at the higher levels of British Government either in India or in England.

Had war not broken out, it is quite probable that, as Sir Henry McMahon advised in his Final Memorandum, some effort would have been expended in extending British administration to those tracts which had, by virtue of the March 1914 notes exchanged between McMahon and the Lönchen Shatra, been added to the British Empire to the north of the old Outer Line in Assam.¹⁴ In the event, so little was done that by 1918 it was almost as if the McMahon Line had never been negotiated. Indeed, there is evidence to suggest that by that time not only was the Government of Assam, immediately responsible for the administration of the frontier tracts in the Assam Himalayas, unaware of the existence of the McMahon Line (which it had forgotten about if, indeed, it had ever fully understood), but even in the centres of power, in Simla and Delhi and in Whitehall, the 1914 frontier had become little more than a vague memory.

When the Simla Conference broke up in July 1914, had there in fact been negotiated a valid new boundary between British India and Tibet along the Assam Himalayas? The exchange of notes between Sir Henry McMahon and the Lönchen Shatra of 24 and 25 March 1914, with the fairly detailed map (in two sheets) showing

the McMahon Line, undoubtedly indicates that Anglo-Tibetan boundary discussions took place and that the alignment outlined on the map associated with the notes was in general accepted by the Tibetan representative. There are, however, a number of caveats here.

First: it is quite clear from the text of the notes that they were to some extent provisional. It was expressly understood that the boundary shown on the map might have to be modified in the light of subsequent information, and, moreover, it was also indicated that some kind of Tibetan administration (the precise nature of which being expressed in the vaguest language) would continue in certain areas south of the new boundary. So the McMahon Line, on the evidence of the exchange of notes which brought it into being, required a measure of subsequent discussion before it attained its definitive shape.

Second: there is the question of whether the Tibetans were in a position, in terms of international law as it was understood by the other parties involved, to make any such agreement as that implied in the notes of 24 and 25 March 1914. Tibet could only cede territory to the British if it were deemed to be a fully sovereign state; and there can be no doubt that the transfer of Tawang to the British side of the McMahon Line involved the cession to the British of what had hitherto been Tibetan territory. In March 1914 the British were negotiating with the Chinese a Convention which made it clear that Tibet was part of Chinese territory (appended Note No. 1 to the Convention) and, indeed, had been under some measure of Chinese control as far as foreign relations were concerned since at least 1890 (as implied by the inclusion of the Anglo-Chinese Convention of that year, relating to Sikkim and Tibet, in the Schedule attached to the 1914 document). The Tibetans might consider themselves to be fully sovereign; but within the general legal atmosphere of the Simla Convention it is hard to see how the British side could actually argue in that sense, and, in fact, they carefully refrained from doing so in their explanation of the 1914 proceedings to the India Office. A case could be made, of course, that the Chinese had deprived themselves of all rights and interests in Tibet so long as they refrained from signing the Simla Convention. But then, what would happen if they should one day sign? Would the cession of what was technically once more Chinese territory now be condoned; or would it be cancelled?

Third: in any case, the British side was precluded by the terms of the Anglo-Russian Convention of 1907 from entering into direct relations with Tibet except through the intermediary of the Chinese Government (which was manifestly not the case with the notes of 24 and 25 March 1914) and from disturbing the territorial integrity of Tibet (which was certainly being disturbed by the British acquisition of undoubted Tibetan territory in the same notes). Even if it might be maintained that the ultimate failure of the Chinese to ratify the Convention conferred a measure of freedom in international relations upon the Tibetans, this still did not absolve the British side from the restrictions of the Anglo-Russian Convention of 1907. This obstacle to British diplomacy did not formally disappear until 1924 when the Convention was expressly cancelled in Article II of the Anglo-Russian Treaty of 7 August of that year, though it had to all intents and purposes been removed by 1920 with the Bolshevik victory in the civil war following the second Russian Revolution of 1917.

Fourth: did the notes of 24 and 25 March 1914 have anything like the force of a treaty? Possibly not. They probably required some kind of formal ratification not only

by the Dalai Lama but also by the other powers in Tibet, notably the three great Lhasa monasteries, particularly Drepung with such a direct interest in Tawang. Other international agreements to which Tibet was a party were adorned with an array of seals including those of the Abbots of Sera, Ganden and Drepung. Neither the notes nor the attached map seem to have any such embellishments, and the only Tibetan name associated with them is that of the Lönchen Shatra.¹⁵

Fifth: there is also a question about the powers possessed by the Tibetan representative at the Simla Conference, the Lönchen Shatra, to cede to the British certain Tibetan areas, and Tawang in particular. The Lönchen Shatra was effectively disgraced on his return to Tibet for this very act, which the Tibetans, when they were pressed on the subject from the mid-1930s onwards, endeavoured to avoid discussing.¹⁶ It was clear then that the cession of Tawang to the British had not gone unchallenged in Lhasa, though it is still by no means certain how much, and what exactly, the Lönchen Shatra actually told his colleagues in the Tibetan Government concerning the details of his discussions with McMahan.¹⁷ As we shall see, right up to the end of British rule in India the Tibetans were, to say the least, ambivalent about the status of Tawang; and the same could be said for a number of other pockets of territory to the south of the McMahon Line, notably along the Lohit, on the upper reaches of the Subansiri and the Siyom, and in the Dihang (or Siang) valley, to which for various reasons the Tibetans could lay claim.

Sixth: the Chinese were not informed, let alone consulted, about the 24 and 25 March 1914 notes and the associated map (in two sheets at a scale of 1 : 500,000). Even if it could be argued that there was no need for them to be so informed, yet the British Government considered that it would be on the whole undesirable to draw their attention to the fact that the British had been dealing secretly with the Tibetans while at the same time discussing with China the nature of their right to do so. The Chinese would certainly interpret this as an underhand British attempt to subvert the Chinese position in Tibet. In 1914 the British still considered Chinese good will to be a desirable commodity. Therefore, from a wider British diplomatic point of view there was a sound case for playing down the legally binding implications of the McMahon Line notes, all other things being equal.

Finally: there is an interesting point as to whether the British delegation at the Simla Conference was, in fact, empowered by its own Government to negotiate with the Tibetan delegation on such matters as the McMahon Line. On 23 July 1914, while transmitting Sir Henry McMahon's Final Memorandum on the Simla Conference to the Secretary of State for India, Lord Crewe, the Viceroy, Lord Hardinge, observed that

we recognise that a consideration of the eastern or Indo-Chinese portion of the North-East Frontier did not form part of the functions of the Conference; and we would therefore request that the views and proposals put forward . . . [relating to the McMahon Line negotiations] . . . may be regarded as personal to Sir Henry McMahon, and not at present carrying the endorsement of the Government of India.¹⁸

The 24/25 March 1914 Anglo-Tibetan notes, in other words, could possibly be construed as representing a bit of freelance activity on the part of Sir Henry McMahon

assisted by Charles Bell, for which the Government of India would not take specific responsibility even if they did not actually disagree with the general aims and objectives.

Sir Henry McMahon, who had only decided (apparently on the advice of Charles Bell, who, indeed, had a hand in the devising of the greater part of the McMahon alignment) to advance the new boundary northwards from the line of the Se La to include Tawang at the very last moment, was aware that it created special problems.¹⁹ In his *Final Memorandum* on the Simla Conference, dated 8 July 1914, he was at pains to point out that

the control of the monastery . . . [of Tawang] . . . and the surrounding country will require great care and tact in order to avoid friction with the Tibetan Government, and in order to open the road and prevent raids from the neighbouring tribes without undue interference with the vested interests of the monastery. I would prefer at present to withhold any detailed suggestions in regard to the treatment of this tract, and would only recommend that a British officer with experience of administration in tribal territory be directed to proceed to Tawang for a period . . . and that the settlement of the future administration of Tawang be decided after he has had an opportunity to thoroughly investigate the local conditions.²⁰

“Care and tact” was certainly called for by the very terms, explicit or implicit, on which Tawang was ceded to the British. Charles Bell, it would appear, persuaded the Lönchen Shatra to agree to the transfer of Tawang on the grounds that only by so doing would the autonomous status of Tibet be guaranteed by the British at the Conference (and, presumably, thereafter) and the Chinese persuaded to accept it.²¹ The Tibetans evidently considered that the guarantee had not been honoured. This was a point which McMahon did not discuss in his *Final Memorandum*.

To question the powers of the Lönchen Shatra over Tawang, of course, is not to say that by the time of the opening of the Simla Conference the Tibetan Government of the 13th Dalai Lama did not consider that they had the power to establish treaty relations with foreign states. In 1913 the 13th Dalai Lama issued what is widely interpreted as a declaration of full Tibetan independence;²² and in January of that year Dorjiev, acting on behalf of the Dalai Lama, entered into a treaty with the Mongol authorities in Urga which was certainly seen in Lhasa as binding and valid.²³ In 1914, on learning of the outbreak of the War, the Dalai Lama made without any reference to China an offer to the Government of India of a thousand soldiers to fight on their side: this was tantamount to a Tibetan declaration of war on the Central Powers, a sovereign act if there ever was one.²⁴ The official Tibetan view as it is currently presented is that the Dalai Lama’s Government enjoyed a special relationship with the Manchu Dynasty. Once that Dynasty had been overthrown so also did that relationship come to an end in so far as it concerned the successor regime in China.²⁵

Had the Chinese still in 1914 been in occupation of Tibetan territory in direct contact to that of British India, as they had been between 1910 and 1912, then it would have been impossible to ignore the many issues arising from the fact of the exchange of notes between McMahon and the Lönchen Shatra on 24 and 25 March 1914; but by 1914 the nearest Chinese outposts in Eastern Tibet were separated from Assam by many miles of extremely difficult mountain country under effective Tibetan

control.²⁶ The McMahon Line boundary, or something like it, which had seemed so vital to British interests in the immediate aftermath of the advance of Chinese troops to Lhasa in 1910, was now of more or less academic interest. It might perhaps be useful to have it on paper; but in practice India was safe for the time being at least without it. Hence the wisest course, given the inherent problems, appeared to be to let sleeping dogs lie. Why risk the possibility of Chinese animosity and the certainty of Russian protest (accompanied by extremely expensive Russian demands for compensation elsewhere, in Afghanistan or in even less desirable areas) by making a public fuss about a boundary line which no longer solved a pressing problem of British frontier policy? This attitude persisted in London, abetted by the Government of India, to result in the omission in the original 1929 edition of Aitchison's *Treaties* of any mention of the 24 and 25 March 1914 notes.²⁷

What about the Simla Convention itself? This was a much more immediate problem than the 24 and 25 March notes. There was nothing secret about the fact that discussions between the British Government of India and the Government of the newly established Chinese Republic on the question of Tibet had actually taken place. It was widely known that the Chinese Government had refused to ratify the convention of 27 April 1914 which their representative, Chen I-fan, had initialled. There existed a slightly different version of this Convention which, on 3 July 1914, the British and Tibetan delegates had accepted (although unsigned) as binding by means of a separate Declaration, but which, without Chinese signature, they agreed would confer no benefits upon China. Precise details concerning this last stage were not available to the general public in 1914; but, again, it was common knowledge that some kind of Anglo-Tibetan deal had been struck at the end of the Conference even though its terms were not revealed. It was widely believed, indeed, that the Simla Convention actually had been signed by the British and Tibetan representatives. What was the legal situation here? The Chinese evidently thought that a secret formal Anglo-Tibetan treaty existed (which, of course, the British could not have admitted in the light of the Russian issue already noted); and Peking was unlikely to accept this without, as had happened in the past, trying to replace it by some kind of bilateral Anglo-Chinese agreement reinforcing the theoretical Chinese position in Tibet.

In the circumstances the British had two, not of necessity mutually exclusive, options before them. They could play down in public the import of the 3 July 1914 Anglo-Tibetan agreements, which included not only the Declaration relating to the main Convention but also a new set of Trade Regulations replacing the Regulations of 1908 (signed by both China and Tibet) while actually putting the new Regulations to such practical use as might seem expedient. They could open discussions with the Chinese in Peking (or, perhaps, London) either for some kind of Chinese adherence to these Anglo-Tibetan agreements or for their replacement by some new and comprehensive Anglo-Chinese understanding on the Tibetan question in its widest context. What they could not do, it seemed, was to argue that the 3 July 1914 agreements provided a final solution to the Tibetan question to be announced publicly as such. Hence the validity of these particular agreements was not asserted in the original version of the next edition of Aitchison's *Treaties*.

We have already noted that one problem associated with the Simla Convention, whether in the April version initialled by the Chinese or in the July version accepted as binding in a separate Declaration by the British and Tibetans, lay in the conflict

created for British diplomacy by this instrument with the Anglo-Russian Convention of 1907. For example: Article 11 of the Tibetan part of the Anglo-Russian Convention declared that “the British and Russian Governments respectively engage not to send representatives to Lhasa”, yet the Simla Convention, Article VIII, stated that

the British Agent who resides at Gyantse may visit Lhasa with his escort whenever it is necessary to consult with the Tibetan Government regarding matters arising out of the Convention of September 7, 1904, between Great Britain and Tibet, which it has been found impossible to settle at Gyantse by correspondence or otherwise.

This was, in fact, a revival of the Special Article of the Lhasa Convention of 1904 which Younghusband had negotiated and which, as much in deference to possible Russian opinion as for any other reason, had been cancelled immediately by the then Acting Viceroy, Lord Ampthill.²⁸ It was extremely unlikely that the Imperial Russian Government were going to accept this provision without demanding costly compensation.

Finally, there was the awkward fact, upon which we have already touched, that the text of the Simla Convention conflicted with the Anglo-Tibetan notes of 24 and 25 March 1914 which created the McMahon Line. By these notes the British in theory, if not at that time in practice, annexed certain tracts of undoubted Tibetan territory, Tawang in particular. By Article II of the Simla Convention, in both texts, “the Government of Great Britain engages not to annex Tibet or any portion of it”. Unless it was argued that the McMahon Line annexations represented a *fait accompli* prior to and beyond the scope of the Convention, it is hard to see how the British occupation of Tawang, which had not been undertaken in practice by July 1914 (or, indeed, by August 1947) could be explained to the Chinese, had they adhered to the Convention, in the light of Article II. It rather looked as if in the end the British might have to decide what they wanted most, the Simla Convention or the McMahon Line.

The situation at the close of the Simla Conference must have seemed to the Government of India and to its Foreign Secretary, Sir Henry McMahon, to be most unsatisfactory with a mass of loose ends left, as it were, dangling over the diplomatic landscape. McMahon, before he left on leave never to return to Indian service, made a number of recommendations in his *Final Memorandum* by the implementation of which he hoped to derive some positive advantages from the Simla proceedings. In the event, only one of his points was acted upon, the provision of some British military assistance to the Tibetans to enable them to keep China, in the short term at least, from re-establishing direct contact with the Assam Himalayas. The Tibetan Government was to be provided in the latter part of 1914, from stocks held in India, with 5,000 old British Lee-Metford or Lee-Enfield rifles and 500,000 rounds of ammunition for them.²⁹ These, along with a further 200,000 rounds in 1915 and 500,000 more at the very end of 1917 or early 1918, combined with some British assistance in military training, to which must be added a little help from Mongol (Russian-trained) and Japanese army instructors and, perhaps, some further arms and ammunition from Russian and Japanese sources, sufficed to keep the Chinese at bay in Eastern Tibet for a while; and in 1917–18 the availability to the Tibetans of this very modest arsenal was a major factor in

the crisis on the Szechuan-Tibet border which almost resulted in the negotiation by the British and the Chinese of some substitute for the abortive Simla Convention.³⁰

With the end of the Simla Conference British policy with regard to Tibet divided into two streams, sometimes merging and sometimes flowing quite separately.

On the one hand, there was an argument that, China having opted out of diplomatic settlement and, in any case, having been repelled from propinquity to British India by Tibetan force, the Tibetans could now be treated to all intents and purposes as *de facto* independent; and any matters relating to the administration of the border between British India and Tibet could be carried out bilaterally without reference to China at all. This view tended to prevail in India, particularly among officers directly responsible for the conduct of relations with the Tibetans, those whom Sir Francis Younghusband once called "the men on the spot".³¹ In the implementation of any policy based on this concept, however, the obstacle of the Anglo-Russian Convention of 1907 had to be in some way surmounted; and this was by no means easy.

On the other hand, there was a line of reasoning which concluded that some fresh instrument would sooner or later have to be negotiated with the Chinese in order to define the nature of Chinese interests in Tibet and the limits of that territory adjacent to Tibet which was under direct Chinese administration. This view was to be detected consistently in the thoughts on the Tibetan question on the part of the British Legation in Peking, though it must be admitted there was no great enthusiasm for the kind of negotiations which would surely result from any British overture to the Chinese Government on this particular question. Again, this line of policy could not escape entirely from the shadow of the Anglo-Russian Convention of 1907.

The Simla Convention itself by 1915 had become in the eyes of the Government of India a document of mainly academic interest, as was pointed out in the clearest possible language to Charles Bell in reply to a lengthy exposition of the British advantages which Bell argued had been obtained at Simla. Bell was told firmly that "the Simla Convention has not been signed by the Chinese Government or accepted by the Russian Government, and is therefore for the present invalid".³²

From the Tibetan point of view the situation after July 1914 was hardly more satisfactory than it appeared to the British. There was a Chinese force in Eastern Tibet firmly entrenched in Chamdo and other centres which the Dalai Lama considered ought to be within his own sphere of control. The vigilance of the Kalon Lama, the Tibetan commander in the east since 1913, combined with Chinese weakness in the continuing aftermath of Revolution and the fall of the Manchu Dynasty, was holding a line which it seemed certain would one day be challenged by a stronger China. What would happen then? The 13th Dalai Lama had hoped that British intervention would provide a lasting solution to this problem. It clearly had not.

Tibetan policy, too, divided into a number of separate streams. First: the Tibetans did not rule out the possibility that the British might still deliver what they had, so it must have struck them, failed to do in 1914, namely an effective diplomatic guarantee against a renewed Chinese advance from the east. It was prudent to cultivate links with the Government of India; and this the 13th Dalai Lama went out of his way to do, aided by his friend Charles Bell. The Dalai Lama, however, was constrained both by the limitations which the British themselves had imposed upon their own policy and by the fact that Tibetan opinion was not unanimous in support of an opening of Tibet to British influence. The cession in 1914 to the British of Tawang, the site of a

daughter house of the powerful Drepung monastery, for example, was extremely unpopular in certain political circles in Lhasa and, as has already been noted, probably contributed to the decline in influence of the Lönchen Shatra, usually considered the most pro-British of the Dalai Lama's senior advisers.³³

Second: the possibility of direct Sino-Tibetan negotiations was never entirely ruled out. A dialogue of sorts, often discreet and indirect, between Lhasa and China, be it with the Chinese authorities in Kansu, Yunnan or Szechuan or with the Central Government, continued spasmodically from the time of the Simla Conference right up to the eventual Chinese occupation of Tibet in the 1950s.

Third: it remained an axiom of Tibetan strategy that an army in the east should watch the Chinese and endeavour to frustrate any attempt to emulate the exploits of Chao Erh-feng. Here, too, there was a complexity of policy. The force of the Kalon Lama, which was the principal Tibetan barrier, was small. Even at the nadir of Chinese strength following the fall of the Manchus it was probably inadequate to cope with a concerted Chinese attack in which the provincial armies of Szechuan collaborated wholeheartedly with those of Yunnan and Kansu and the Mahommedan General at Sining. The Kalon Lama (Kalon Chamba Tendar), who was not only an able soldier but no mean diplomatist, usually managed to isolate the Szechuanese element from those of Kansu and Yunnan.³⁴

Without this achievement it is probable that the intensified Sino-Tibetan fighting which broke out in late 1917 would have resulted in disaster for the Tibetans instead of that brief Tibetan triumph which was to provide the occasion for a renewed British attempt to reopen the negotiations with China aborted at Simla. There is a great deal of evidence to suggest that from the period when the Simla Conference was still in session right up to the end of 1917 the Kalon Lama never entirely closed his mind to the possibility of some settlement through direct Sino-Tibetan negotiations with or without a British presence.

Notes

1 For the missions to Tashilhunpo of George Bogle in 1774–1775 and Samuel Turner in 1783, see: C. R. Markham, ed., *Narratives of the Mission of George Bogle to Tibet, and of the Journey of Thomas Manning to Lhasa*, London 1876; G. Bogle, ed., Wolf-Dieter Grün, *Im Land der lebenden Buddhas*, Stuttgart 1984; S. Turner, *An Account of an Embassy to the Court of the Teshoo Lama in Tibet*, London 1800, Schuyler Camman, *Trade Through the Himalayas. The Early British Attempts to Open Tibet*, Princeton, New Jersey, 1951; G. Woodcock, *Into Tibet. The Early British Explorers*, London 1971; J. MacGregor, *Tibet. A Chronicle of Exploration*, London 1970.

The 6th Panchen Lama (sometimes referred to as the 3rd Incarnation) died in 1780. When Turner reached Tashilhunpo there was a Regency in office.

2 For a history of Anglo-Tibetan relations during this period, see: A. Lamb, *British India and Tibet 1766–1910*, London 1986.

3 Quoted in: Lamb, *India and Tibet, op. cit.*, pp. 116–117.

4 The Tibetans consumed vast quantities of tea which came in a specially prepared form, as bricks, from Szechuan in China. The tea trade was a major source of wealth for many Tibetan monasteries. In the event during the British period Indian tea never managed to compete with the Chinese product in Tibetan markets.

5 Quoted in: Lamb, *India and Tibet, op. cit.*, p. 134.

6 For text, see: A. Lamb, *The McMahon Line. A Study in the Relations between India, China and Tibet, 1904 to 1914*, 2 vols., London 1966, Vol. 1, pp. 237–238.

- 7 For text, see: Lamb, *McMahon Line*, *op. cit.*, Vol. 1, pp. 239–241.
- 8 On Dorjiev, see: A. Lamb, “Some Notes on Russian Intrigue in Tibet”, *Journal of the Royal Central Asian Society*, 1959.
- 9 Francis Younghusband had competed against Russian intrigues in the Pamirs and Sinkiang in the late 1880s and early 1890s. He first met Curzon in Chitral in 1894. Soon after, Younghusband became deeply involved in the events which produced the Jameson Raid in South Africa.
- 10 Another provision in the original Lhasa Convention was a Tibetan indemnity, payable in 75 annual installments, as security for which the British would occupy the Chumbi Valley. The possession of the Chumbi Valley placed the British right on the edge of the Tibetan plateau; and from it they could easily spread out deeper into the country when a suitable opportunity presented itself. Had the Lhasa Convention stood unmodified, the Chumbi Valley would still have been occupied by India when the Chinese “liberated” Tibet in 1950–1951. In the event, the 75 year period was reduced to 3, and by 1908 both the Tibetan indemnity had been paid off (by China on behalf of Tibet) and the Chumbi Valley occupation had been terminated.
- 11 The key provisions of the Simla Convention, text of 27 April 1914, were:

Article II. The Governments of Great Britain and China recognizing that Tibet is under the suzerainty of China, and recognizing also the autonomy of Outer Tibet, engage to respect the territorial integrity of the country, and to abstain from all interference in the administration of Outer Tibet (including the selection and installation of the Dalai Lama), which shall remain in the hands of the Tibetan Government at Lhasa.

The Government of China engages not to convert Tibet into a Chinese province. The Government of Great Britain engages not to annex Tibet or any portion of it.

Article III. . . . The Government of China engages . . . not to send troops into Outer Tibet, nor to station civil or military officers, nor to establish Chinese colonies in the country . . .

Article IV. The foregoing Article shall not be held to preclude the continuance of the arrangement by which, in the past, a Chinese high official with suitable escort has been maintained at Lhasa, but it is hereby provided that the said escort shall in no circumstances exceed 300 men.

Article V. The Governments of China and Tibet engage that they will not enter into any negotiations or agreements regarding Tibet with one another, or with any other Power, excepting such negotiations between Great Britain and Tibet which are provided for . . . [in the Lhasa Convention of 1904 and the Anglo-Chinese Convention of 1906].

Article VIII. The British Agent who resides at Gyantse may visit Lhasa with his escort whenever it is necessary to consult with the Tibetan Government regarding matters arising out of . . . [the Lhasa Convention of 1904] . . . which it has been found impossible to settle at Gyantse by correspondence or otherwise.

Article IX. For the purposes of the present Convention the borders of Tibet, and the boundary between Outer and Inner Tibet, shall be shown in red and blue respectively on the map attached hereto.

Nothing in the present Convention shall be held to prejudice the existing rights of the Tibetan Government in Inner Tibet, which include the power to select and appoint high priests of monasteries and to retain full control in all matters affecting religious institutions.

To this text were added seven notes, of which the following are of particular importance:

Note 1. It is understood by the High Contracting Parties that Tibet forms part of Chinese territory.

Note 2. After the selection and installation of the Dalai Lama by the Tibetan Government, the latter will notify the installation to the Chinese Government, whose representative at Lhasa will then formally communicate to His Holiness the titles consistent with his dignity, which have been conferred by the Chinese Government.

Note 3. It is also understood that the selection and appointment of all officers in Outer Tibet will rest with the Tibetan Government.

Note 4. Outer Tibet shall not be represented in the Chinese Parliament or in any other similar body.

12 McMahon wrote to Lönchen Shatra on 24 March 1914 as follows:

In February last you accepted the India-Tibet frontier from the Isu Razi Pass to the Bhutan frontier, as given in the map (two sheets), of which two copies are herewith attached, subject to the following conditions:

(a) The Tibetan ownership of private estates on the British side of the frontier will not be disturbed.

(b) If the sacred places of Tso Karpo and Tsari Sarpa fall within a day's march of the British side of the frontier, they will be included in Tibetan territory and the frontier modified accordingly.

I understand that your Government have now agreed to this frontier subject to the above two conditions.

You wished to know whether certain dues now collected by the Tibetan Government at Tsöna jong and Kongbu and Kham from the Monpas and Lopas for articles sold may still be collected. Mr. Bell has informed you that such details will be settled in a friendly spirit, when you have furnished him with further information, which you have promised.

The Lönchen Shatra replied to McMahon on 25 March 1914 as follows:

As it was feared that there might be friction in future unless the boundary between India and Tibet is clearly defined, I submitted the map, which you sent me in February last, to Lhasa for orders. I have now received orders from Lhasa, and I accordingly agree to the boundary marked in red in the two copies of the maps signed by you subject to the conditions, mentioned in your letter, dated 24th March, sent to me through Mr. Bell. I have signed and sealed the two copies of the maps. I have kept one copy here and return herewith the other.

13 The difference between the two texts is to be found in *Article X*, which in the April version contains the following:

In case of differences between the Governments of China and Tibet in regard to questions arising out of this Convention the aforesaid Governments engage to refer them to the British Government for equitable adjustment.

This very clear statement of the British role as referee in the squabbles between China and Tibet was considered by the Foreign Office to involve sailing rather close to the wind of the 1907 Anglo-Russian Convention. In the July text, accordingly, it was deleted.

14 Some Indian scholars still persist in arguing that the old Outer Line was not, in fact, the international border of British India but, rather, some kind of boundary drawn up for administrative reasons which separated territories in varying degrees British on both sides. The argument, which simply does not stand up to investigation on the basis of the available documentary evidence, is advanced rather unconvincingly in D. P. Choudhury, *The North-East Frontier of India 1865–1914*, The Asiatic Society, Calcutta 1978.

15 The absence of seals from the map (in two sheets) is interesting. According to the Lönchen Shatra's note to McMahon of 25 March 1914, "I have signed and sealed the two copies of the maps. I have kept one copy here and return herewith the other". The published version of the map returned to McMahon, however, has no seal or signature on it, not even those of the Lönchen Shatra. Can this be, indeed, the same map that was one of the two sets originally handed to the Lönchen Shatra? The alleged McMahon copy of the map, in two sheets and at a scale of 1 : 500,000, was published in: India, Ministry of External Affairs, *Atlas of the Northern Frontier of India*, New Delhi 1961, Maps 21 & 22; Dorothy Woodman, *Himalayan Frontiers*, London 1969, facing p. 181. The copies in London in the records of the India Office and the Foreign Office, of course, cannot be either of the two original sets signed and sealed according to the note. Up to 1947 the Tibetans never produced, so the British records would indicate, their set; and the British do not seem to have shown their set to the Tibetans.

16 For the disgrace of the Lönchen Shatra over the Tawang issue, see: Lamb, *McMahon Line*, *op. cit.*, p. 300; also L/P&S/10/434, Bell to India, 17 July 1915, who reported that the

Lönchen Shatra was “much blamed for failing in his negotiations in India and for surrendering the Tawang tract and for making other important concessions to the British Government in the recent Convention”.

- 17 For one thing, Tawang monastery was a daughter house of Drepung which, apart from being Tibet’s largest monastery, was often more sympathetic to the Chinese than other forces in Lhasa politics – many of its monks came from the Sino-Tibetan border areas – and it was a focus of opposition to the policies of the 13th Dalai Lama. See, for example: Sir Charles Bell, *Tibet Past & Present*, Oxford 1924, p. 120; Sir Charles Bell, *Portrait of the Dalai Lama*, London 1946, p. 125. It is hard to see how the Government of the 13th Dalai Lama could explain to Drepung in 1914 and the years immediately following that Tawang was now British without provoking the kind of violence for which Drepung was renowned, unless it was able to produce some very convincing reasons as yet not revealed to the general public. Loseling College of Drepung received the equivalent of c. Rs. 900 each year from Tawang revenues.

Part of the Tawang area, Mago (to the east of Tawang monastery), was the fief of the Samdrup Potrang family of Lhasa.

According to a memorandum in Bell’s papers now in the India Office Library and Records, the Lönchen Shatra told Bell that he had discussed the Tawang question with his colleagues in Lhasa. But with whom, in what detail, and referring to all of Tawang or merely that part south of the Se La? We do not have the answers to these questions. The Lönchen Shatra also told Bell that the Tawang question had not been discussed with the Tibetan interests directly concerned in Tawang itself. Bell’s memoranda leave one in no doubt that there were a number of loose ends left in the Tawang question, what he told the Lönchen Shatra he considered to be “matters of detail which can be settled later on”. See: Eur MSS F80/5e.

- 18 Quoted by Karunakar Gupta in “The McMahon Line 1911–45: the British Legacy”, *The China Quarterly*, 47, July/September 1971.
- 19 Apart from the Bell papers, Eur MSS F80/5, see C. J. Christie in “Sir Charles Bell: A Memoir”, *Asian Affairs*, February 1977.
- 20 L/P&S/10/344, McMahon, *Final Memorandum*. Apart from Captain G. A. Nevill, who had been in Tawang in April 1914 (and before the *Final Memorandum* had been written), no British officer is recorded in the archives of the India Office Library and Records in London (or in the very detailed survey of the Assam Government archives made by Sir Robert Reid, Governor of Assam from 1937 to 1942, in his *History of the Frontier Areas Bordering on Assam from 1883–1941*, Shillong 1941) to have gone up to Tawang on official business until Captain G. S. Lightfoot’s visit in 1936; though the place had been visited by F. Ludlow and G. Sherriff in 1934 and F. Kingdon Ward in 1935; and, of course, one must not forget F. M. Bailey’s visit in 1913.
- 21 Bell had a vision of Tawang as a potential replacement for the Chumbi Valley (which the British had been unable to retain for more than three years after the Younghusband Expedition) as a British outpost on the Tibetan plateau: from thence would radiate British political, cultural and economic influence which would make sure that the rulers of Lhasa would remain friendly to the Government of India despite manifold temptations to stray.
- 22 See: Tsepon W. D. Shakabpa, *Tibet. A Political History*, New Haven and London 1967, pp. 246–247. See also: M. van Walt van Praag, *The Status of Tibet: History, Rights and Prospects in International Law*, Boulder, Colorado, 1987, pp. 48–49 where much of the text of this Declaration is quoted.
- 23 L/P&S/10/432, Memorandum by British Legation, Peking, dated 30 August 1913, which confirms the existence of this treaty. For the text of the Urga Treaty of 11 January 1913, the authenticity of which has been doubted in some quarters, see: M. G. van Walt van Praag, *The Status of Tibet: History, Rights and Prospects in International Law*, Boulder, Colorado, 1987, pp. 320–321.

It is interesting that during the Simla Conference the Lönchen Shatra told Bell that the Dalai Lama denied that Dorjiev had ever been authorised to sign anything like a formal treaty with the Mongols. See: Eur MSS 80/5, Bell’s memorandum of 3 February 1914.

- 24 See: Sir C. Bell, *Tibet Past & Present*, Oxford 1924, pp. 160–162; van Walt van Praag, *Tibet, op. cit.*, 61–62, 232 n9. The fact of the Dalai Lama’s offer was confirmed by a statement by

Austen Chamberlain, Secretary of State for India, in the House of Commons on 20 October 1915.

The Dalai Lama's offer was turned down by the Government of India.

- 25 See: van Walt van Praag, *Tibet, op. cit.*, pp. 12–13. The relationship is described as Chö-yön, meaning that between a Bodhisattva (that is to say the Dalai Lama as the reincarnation of Avalokitesvara) and his Protector. The Manchu Emperors were recognised by the Dalai Lamas as reincarnations of another Bodhisattva, Manjusri, which added further complexity to this relationship. It is unlikely that international lawyers can have much to say to illuminate the technicalities of relationships between Bodhisattvas.
- 26 This, however, was not the case with British Burma, as Sir Henry McMahon pointed out at some length in his *Final Memorandum*. The problems of Sino-Burmese boundary policy lie beyond the scope of this book: it should be noted, however, that British Burma possessed a long common frontier with Chinese territory of which the McMahon Line, about half of the Burmese part of which lay in 1914 along Chinese controlled territory, was not the only sector (and certainly not the most important) subject to Anglo-Chinese argument and discussion.

- 27 Vol. XIV. This was replaced in 1938 by another Vol. XIV, still bearing the date of the original 1929 edition, which did in fact print the various Simla Documents. How this odd state of affairs came about will be considered below.

- 28 The story of the Lhasa Convention is related in: Lamb, *India and Tibet, op. cit.*, Chapter X.

- 29 It may be speculated that the provision of these weapons was in some way connected with the Tibetan territorial concessions with respect to the McMahon Line. Without the minutes of the discussions leading to the 24/25 March 1914 notes, of course, one can say no more.

The Lee-Enfield (in small arms terminology) evolved from the Lee-Metford. The rifles in Tibetan military hands which Brigadier-General George Pereira saw in Eastern Tibet in 1921 were, he thought, Lee-Metfords, rather dirty though oiled, and with the sights removed. The rifles in the first British deliveries to Tibet were sometimes referred to as “long” rifles as opposed to the “short” rifles supplied later on. The “short” rifles were all Lee-Enfields.

See: Sir Francis Younghusband, ed., *Peking to Lhasa: the narrative of the journeys in the Chinese Empire made by the late Brigadier-General George Pereira*, London 1925, p. 148.

The Lee-Metford was replaced in general British Army service around the time of the Boer War by the Lee-Enfield because the Metford system of rifling, while more accurate, with its shallower grooves was subject to more rapid wear than the system adopted in the Lee-Enfield. Wear in the bore of a Lee-Metford began to be apparent after the firing of about 3,000 rounds. There is some evidence during the 1917–18 fighting in Eastern Tibet that the rifles used by the Tibetans had badly worn bores, which rather suggests Lee-Metfords; but we cannot be sure. Apart from the rifling and the sights, the two weapons were virtually indistinguishable; and they both used the same .303 rimmed ammunition.

As a matter of convenience I have referred to British rifles provided to the Tibetans by the Government of India as Lee-Enfields even if they might have been Lee-Metfords. The main significance of Lee-Metford over Lee-Enfield in this particular context is that the Lee-Metford by 1914 was quite obsolete. By supplying these weapons to the Tibetans, if they were indeed Lee-Metfords, the British had in no way diminished their military strength because the weapons would otherwise have remained in store.

- 30 The British archives contain a number of reports on the subject of Japanese military instructors in Tibet, notably one Yasujiro Yajima, as well as on Tibetan attempts to obtain arms and ammunition, either from Russia or from Japan. It is possible that by 1917 a certain amount of rifle ammunition was being manufactured in Lhasa; but, if so, not in quantities sufficient to meet the demand of military action on any scale. It is also possible that .303 ammunition might have been acquired in Afghanistan or on the North-West Frontier and then smuggled into Tibet; but the records show no trace of such a traffic.

Assuming that the 5,000 Lee-Enfields were the only modern rifles possessed by the Tibetan army, then the total ammunition for them supplied by India between 1914 and 1918 only works out at 240 rounds per weapon, which does not provide much for musketry training let alone battle. It seems likely that there were some other modern weapons of various patterns (and calibres) in the Tibetan armoury along with numerous weapons of

considerable antiquity. There can be no doubt, however, that the shock fire-power of the Kalon Lama's troops in Eastern Tibet (Kham) came from the British Indian Lee-Enfields.

See, for example: Hardinge to London, 29 November 1913 in L/P&S/10/432; Bell to India, 19 May 1915 in L/P&S/10/434.

On Yasujiro Yajima, see also: Shakabpa, *Tibet, op. cit.*, pp. 250, 259. Yasujiro Yajima had been closely associated with the Dalai Lama since 1912, and in his way was probably as significant a foreign influence over the policy of the 13th Dalai Lama as Dorjiev or Bell. See: Lamb, *McMahon Line*, vol. 2, pp. 421–422. In 1912 the Government of India had discovered the following information about Yasujiro Yajima. He had been a soldier in the Imperial Japanese Army and seen combat in the Russo-Japanese War. He had then become a military instructor in the Toyama Military College, leaving the Japanese service in 1907. In 1908 he was instructing Chinese troops in Szechuan. Between 1907 and 1912 he had travelled widely, visiting Shanghai, Szechuan, Tibet, India, the United States, and Japan. It is extremely improbable that when he returned to Tibet in 1912 he did not retain links with some elements of the Japanese Government.

The further 200,000 rounds of ammunition were agreed to, subject to payment by the Tibetans, in March 1915. See: FO 535118, Viceroy to Secretary of State, 25 March 1915. On the additional 500,000 rounds supplied in December 1917, see, L/P&S/10/714, which contains the papers on this subject. It is not clear when this last consignment was delivered, probably in the first half of January 1918, in which case it would have arrived in time for use during the Tibetan siege of Chamdo. See, for example: Bray to Political Officer Sikkim, 7 January 1918. This ammunition was supplied at the request of the Tibetan Government; and the Government of India could have been in no doubt that it would be used against the Chinese in Eastern Tibet.

British military training involved the instruction at Gyantse in 1915 of a small number of Tibetan troops, in all 2 officers, 2 Havildars and 50 ordinary soldiers, by the Officer Commanding the British Military Detachment at the Trade Mart. Training of Tibetan troops at Gyantse, it would appear, was not then resumed until the very end of 1921. See: L/P&S/11/203, P. 4946.

Richardson states, *Tibet, op. cit.*, p. 119, that in 1916 the British placed a total embargo upon the supply of arms to Tibet and prevented the Tibetans from obtaining arms from Japan.

- 31 See: Sir Francis Younghusband, *India and Tibet. A History of the Relations which have subsisted between the two Countries from the time of Warren Hastings to 1910; with a Particular Account of the Mission to Lhasa of 1904*, London 1910, p. 407. This was reprinted in Hong Kong (Oxford in Asia) in 1985, with an introduction by Alastair Lamb.
- 32 FO 535118, Bell to India, 6 August 1915, and India to Bell, 3 September 1915. These remarks have sometimes mistakenly been attributed to Bell himself. Bell, of course, was “trying to make out a case that the Simla Convention did have some validity. See: A. T. Grunfeld, *The Making of Modern Tibet*, London 1987, p. 66. Grunfeld is misquoting Karunakar Gupta, “The McMahon Line”, *China Quarterly*, *loc. cit.* p. 524.
- 33 The Lönchen Shatra, Paljor Dorje, died before 1920 according to Charles Bell, who during his mission to Lhasa in 1920–21 regretted the absence of one who had been the most pro-British of all the Dalai Lama's Ministers. According to Shakabpa, *Tibet, op. cit.* p. 262, he died in 1923.
- 34 Perhaps the best, and most sympathetic, account of the Kalon Lama in Eastern Tibet is to be found in: Louis Magrath King, *China in Turmoil. Studies in Personality*, London 1927. This work, far less well known than Eric Teichman, *Travels of a Consular Officer in Eastern Tibet, together with a history of the relations between China, Tibet and India*, Cambridge 1922, contains a great deal of extremely interesting first hand information on the situation in Eastern Tibet from 1913 to 1922, during which period King was twice stationed at Tachienlu as Special Assistant, from October 1913 to January 1916 and October 1919 to November 1922. In December 1921 King was given the honorary rank of Consul; and in January 1924 he retired on pension from the China Consular Service. [...] Louis King married a Tibetan lady, Rinchen Lhamo, who wrote, no doubt with King's assistance, an

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account of her life, *We Tibetans*, first published in London in 1926 and reprinted in New York in 1985.

King indicated that the Kalon Lama died in 1922, after his recall to Lhasa. In late May or early June the Kalon Lama was replaced as commander of the Tibetan forces in the East by Trimon Shape. King reported that it was widely rumoured that the Kalon Lama had been murdered.

GREAT BRITAIN, CHINA AND THE STATUS OF TIBET, 1914–21

Clive Christie

Source: *Modern Asian Studies* 10(4) (1976): pp. 481–509.

The decade preceding the First World War, with the Younghusband expedition, the Chinese forward movement in Tibet of 1909–11, and the Simla Conference of 1913–14, is naturally the period of Anglo-Tibetan relations that has been most thoroughly covered by historians. It could indeed be argued that, on the surface at least, the relationship forged between British India and Tibet by the conclusion of the Simla Conference remained unchanged and largely unchallenged until the transfer of power to an independent Indian Government. This seeming stability, however, masks a debate over Tibetan policy within the British and Indian Governments that was particularly intense during the years 1919–21, and which reflected Britain's nervousness over the political instability of north Asia as a whole during and after the First World War. Before the First World War, the 'problem' of Tibet was largely a parochial issue for the British Indian Government, but at the conclusion of the First World War this 'problem' had become an important ingredient of a much wider debate on the overall direction of post-war British policy in Asia.

Political developments both favourable and unfavourable persuaded British officials by the end of the First World War that the status of Tibet, both territorially and politically, would have to be settled swiftly. The major factor prompting this sense of urgency during the war was the growing power of Japan, and the possibility that a serious decline in the position of the Allied powers in Europe would provide Japan with the opportunity to establish some form of hegemony in east Asia, including the eastern marches of Tibet. The rapid decline of the Japanese threat after 1918 did not, however, diminish the urgency of the need for a settlement of Tibet's status; indeed, Britain's temporarily strong position in Asia at the end of the war, strengthened even further, so far as Tibet was concerned, by China's deepening political paralysis, indicated that there might never be a more favourable opportunity to conclude a settlement on the Tibetan question. From another perspective, the collapse of Russian power during the war freed British policy from restraints in Tibet that had been present hitherto, while the gradual re-emergence of Russian power in the form of Bolshevism pointed to the need for haste in stabilizing Britain's relations with Tibet.

The events from 1914 to 1919 had, in fact, created a political vacuum in central and eastern Asia which was simultaneously a threat and opportunity to British interests.

Those who during these and subsequent years advocated a forward policy in Tibet pointed out that it was essential that British influence should be asserted in a vacuum that was acknowledged to be of strategic importance to British India. However, other considerations intruded at this time and complicated this straightforward assessment. Many, particularly in the Foreign Office and the Legation at Peking, felt that a policy based on the temporary weakness of China would be sacrificing long-term for short-term consideration. Furthermore, although the emerging possibility that Britain's days in Asia were numbered seems to have had little overt influence in the debate over Tibet, there is no doubt that the recognition that Britain's possessions in Asia, particularly, of course, British India itself, were destined for self-governing status, inhibited moves towards a forward policy in Tibet. In addition, a general awareness of Britain's shrinking position as a world power and her extreme military insecurity in Asia, was a powerful deterrent to undertaking new adventures beyond existing imperial boundaries.

Although the Foreign Office became in these years increasingly involved in the debate over Tibet, it was naturally the Indian Government and the India Office who were primarily responsible for defining a consistent policy towards Tibet. In general terms, the interests of India required that Tibet should act as a stable buffer state protecting the northern boundaries of India itself and the protectorates of Bhutan and Sikkim. Initially, this did not imply that British Indian interests required an independent or even autonomous Tibet; up to 1912, in fact, the India Office in particular was prepared to accept Chinese control over Tibetan affairs, regarding this as preferable to a complete political vacuum.¹ After 1912, it became a consistently held theme of British policy that an autonomous Tibet was preferable to any form of Chinese control.² The objections to Chinese rule were two-fold: in the first place, experience showed that the Chinese were totally incapable of imposing any stable form of control in Tibet, and stability was the key aspect of Tibet's buffer role. In the second place, it became apparent in the years after the Chinese revolution that the Chinese Government was far more liable to fall under the influence of an 'unfriendly' power than an autonomous Tibetan government.³

Although the question of the delimitation of the Sino-Tibetan boundary loomed large in Sino-British negotiations in the early twentieth century, in the long term the Indian Government was 'less directly interested in the question of the location of the Sino-Tibetan boundary than in those of the status of Tibet and her constitutional relations with China'.⁴ In all the debates on the status of Tibet, however, the notion of concluding some form of protectorate agreement with the Tibetan Government was never seriously contemplated in view of the diplomatic risks and military expense that might be involved. British policy was therefore forced to rely on the more delicate instruments of diplomacy and influence in order to ensure the existence of a friendly, stable and autonomous Tibet: but the refusal to contemplate the extension of any form of protectorate over Tibet made it inevitable that the settlement of Tibet's status that was regarded as essential could only be achieved through agreement with China.

The key, therefore, to an agreement on the status of Tibet lay in the Chinese view of their relationship with Tibet. Since the latter half of the eighteenth century, that relationship could be described as a loose form of protectorate with a mutual acknowledgement of overall Chinese suzerainty, in which the Manchus protected Tibet from foreign incursions and insulated Tibet from relations with foreign powers, relations

that might eventually have threatened China's suzerainty.⁵ As in the case of many other of her dependencies, however, Manchu power and influence over Tibet steadily declined in the course of the nineteenth century, to the extent that by the end of the nineteenth century British India discovered that China was quite unable to exercise any form of restraint over Tibetan policy. It was this failure on China's part that prompted the Younghusband expedition of 1903-04 and the attempt to enter into direct relations with the Tibetan Government.⁶ This British threat to Chinese suzerainty, however, prompted a final spasm of energy on the part of the Manchus, and from 1905 to 1911 Chao Ehr-feng, first as frontier commissioner, then as imperial commissioner for Tibet, and finally, as the Viceroy of Szechuan, supervised a thorough Chinese military intervention in Tibet designed to absorb the border areas between Tibet and China into China proper and to place Lhasa in a strictly subordinate status under China.⁷ This Chinese forward movement (which was characterized by much Chinese brutality)⁸ disintegrated with the outbreak of the 1911 revolution in China and the subsequent execution of Chao Ehr-feng in December 1911.⁹

In general, British policy up to 1904 accepted China's suzerain status in Tibet, and it was only when the futility of attempting to deal with Tibet through the Chinese Government became apparent that the Younghusband expedition forcibly established direct contact with the Tibetan Government.¹⁰ However, although the Younghusband expedition succeeded by the terms of the 1904 Lhasa Convention in regularizing British-Indian relations with Tibet and in insulating Tibet from the putative dangers of Russian intrigue, the whole forward movement implied in the Younghusband policy was regarded with deep misgiving by the home Government, and could be regarded as an anachronism in the general trend of British policy towards Tibet at this time.¹¹ The policy of Younghusband and Lord Curzon was almost immediately sharply reversed by the conclusion in April 1906 of a treaty with China where the principal benefits for Britain of the 1904 convention remained intact, but where it was acknowledged in the clearest possible fashion that responsibility for Tibetan affairs lay in Chinese hands.¹² So long as the British Government was satisfied that China was capable of fulfilling her treaty obligations relating to Tibet (and China's forward movement in Tibet after 1905 seemed to indicate that she would be), Britain was in fact prepared to pursue a policy of 'self-denial' in Tibet. The zenith of this self-denial policy with regard to Tibet came with the Anglo-Russian treaty of 1907, in which both countries agreed not to intervene in the internal affairs of Tibet, not to encroach upon the territorial integrity of Tibet, not to enter into direct relations with the Tibetan Government but only indirectly through the Chinese suzerain power, not to send representatives to Lhasa and not to seek concessions in Tibet.¹³ The essentially negative core of Britain's policy towards Tibet could not be more clearly underlined: in order to avert the hypothetical danger of Russian intrigue in Tibet without at the same time indulging in new colonial adventures, Britain was prepared to sign away her freedom of action to intervene more directly in Tibetan affairs.¹⁴

The shortcomings of this policy were soon to emerge. The main premise of this policy, that China would be both able and willing to implement the agreements of 1904 and 1906 concerning Tibet, proved to be unfounded. After 1910, the Chinese effectively sealed the Tibetan-Indian border and frustrated all trading contacts and, a far more sinister development, penetrated the undefined border lands to the north of Assam and Burma, possibly in an attempt to develop communications between the

Yunnan area and central Tibet.¹⁵ The prospect of Chinese infiltration in these remote tribal areas, hitherto largely independent of both British and Tibetan influence, raised the spectre of a continually unstable north-eastern frontier of India and seriously alarmed the Indian Government.¹⁶ What probably convinced the Indian and home Governments most decisively of the undesirability of an active Chinese presence in Tibet, however, was the unstable nature of China's control over Tibet. As has been noted, the essential ingredient of a successful buffer state in Tibet was political stability, and the inability of the Chinese to impose stable political control, underlined by the disintegration of Chinese rule in Tibet after the 1911 revolution, coupled with the consistent refusal of the Tibetans themselves to accept Chinese government, seemed to be an open invitation to foreign intrigue and possibly intervention.¹⁷ The danger that the Tibetan Government might appeal to Russia for military aid against China lay constantly at the back of the minds of those responsible for British policy towards Tibet.¹⁸

In an immediate response to this threat, the Indian Government set out to tighten its political control over the border area between China and Tibet. In 1910, Charles Bell concluded a new treaty with the state of Bhutan in which the Indian Government directly controlled Bhutan's foreign relations (an advance from the purely mediatory role that India had hitherto played in Bhutan's foreign policy), thus excluding the dangers of Chinese intrigue in the kingdom.¹⁹ More significantly, the Indian Government hesitantly sanctioned a forward policy in the Himalayan buffer area to the north of Assam and Burma; in the years 1911-13, a series of expeditions explored these remote areas and closely examined the political systems and traditions of allegiance among the hill tribes. The principal design of this forward movement was not to impose a permanent form of British administration, but to delineate a wide buffer zone under a loose form of British 'influence', where Chinese political influence would be rigorously excluded.²⁰

The primary issue, however, remained the question of the status of Tibet. It had become clear that the status of Tibet as outlined in the 1906 and 1907 agreements was unsatisfactory to the British Government and from 1912 onwards the British Government strove to extract from the Chinese Government a re-definition of the status of Tibet that would accord with existing political realities, namely: a clear recognition by China of Tibet's autonomous status and consequently a loosening of the ties between China and Tibet from a supervisory to a nominal suzerain status, and an acceptance by China of closer contacts between Tibet and British India. The failure of the Chinese Republic under Yuan Shih-kai to restore to restore its position in Tibet by military means eventually persuaded the Chinese Government to attempt to restore at least some measure of influence in Tibet through the conference table, and in October 1913 tripartite discussions between China, Tibet and Indian Government began in Simla.²¹

Although the fundamental issue at this conference was the question of a satisfactory re-definition of Tibet's political status, discussions at the conference were diverted by a complicated territorial scheme put forward by British India in which a new political entity, Inner Tibet, was proposed as a buffer zone between autonomous Tibet and China proper.²² The clear design behind this proposal was to create a network of buffers behind which British India could rest secure: Inner Tibet would provide a barrier for autonomous Tibet against Chinese influence and would at the same time reduce contact between Tibet and Russian-influenced Mongolia, while an

autonomous Outer Tibet would provide a wide barrier for India against Chinese influence.²³ Ultimately, the talks foundered on the details of the territorial delimitation of Inner Tibet, a conception that neither the Chinese nor Tibetans favoured in any case,²⁴ and China at the last moment refused to sign the agreement. The terms of the Simla convention were nevertheless accepted as binding by the British and Tibetan representatives.²⁵

This bilateral agreement drew the Tibetan Government nearer to and at the same time secured Tibetan agreement to a new boundary between Tibet and India in the Himalayas; but it left the question of the status of Tibet in a hopeless tangle.²⁶ However satisfactory it may be in the short term to establish the basis for a friendly relationship with autonomous Tibet, in the long term a re-definition of Tibet's status required the consent of China and also of Russia, since the 1907 treaty had effectively tied Britain's hands in Tibet. So long as Russia showed herself unwilling to contemplate a revision of the 1907 treaty as far Tibet was concerned, those clauses in the Anglo-Tibetan bilateral agreement of 1914 which conflicted with the terms of the 1907 agreement, particularly the provision permitting the British trade agent at Gyantse to visit Lhasa 'should occasion require', would be inoperative.²⁷ By the time of the outbreak of the First World War, therefore, the problem of the status of Tibet was completely unresolved, and major problems confronted British policy makers with regard to Tibet: in the first place, some way would have to be found round the 'self-denying' agreement with Russia and, secondly, it was imperative to persuade China back to the conference table, either on the basis of the Simla agreement, or, more likely, with the terms modified in favour of China.²⁸

During the First World War, the overall question of Tibet's status naturally receded into the background, but Tibet's security still remained a matter for the lively concern of the Indian Government. The progressive political disintegration of China during the war years, reaching a nadir in the summer of 1917 with the outbreak of civil war, coupled with the collapse of Russia in 1917, opened a virtual political vacuum in central and eastern Asia, and the fear of the Indian Government and the India Office was that Japan would succeed in filling this vacuum. An India Office memorandum of May 1916 cogently outlined the weak position of Great Britain in the Far East during the war and the extent of the threat that she faced from Japan.²⁹ The basic point made by the memorandum was that Britain's alliance with Japan, on which she depended to an increasing degree as the war progressed, was of the most precarious kind, and that in the long term the interests of Britain and Japan in Asia diverged radically. It seemed clear that Japan would attempt to take advantage of the war situation to expand her influence on the mainland of Asia, in the first instance directing her attention towards China, but ultimately seeking to gain a foothold in the European colonial preserves to the west, north and south of China. An obvious target for Japan's interest and intrigue would be British India: as the memorandum put it, 'if the ambition of Japan is to play a leading role in the Far East, it is in her interest to keep us as weak as possible there, and to this end a constant threat to India is an obvious means'. One prong of this strategy would undoubtedly be the encouragement of pan-Asiatic sentiment within India itself and the encouragement of the Indian revolutionary movement; but the more formidable threat was that Japan would seek to expand her influence through the medium of a Japanese-controlled or Japanese-influenced Chinese government in the Chinese provinces surrounding Tibet, thus

creating 'a repetition by Japan on the eastern side of those tactics by which Russia has for half a century embarrassed us on the western side'. From such a vantage point, Japan would be able to expand her influence, albeit indirectly, into Tibet itself, 'establishing herself in positions from which in time of need she can threaten the security of the north and north-east frontier of India, and the eastern frontier of Burma, compelling us to lock up troops for their protection . . . and from which at all times she can embarrass us with pin-pricks when the exigencies of the general diplomatic situation call for their application'. The memorandum reflected that the attempt by the British Government to exclude both Russian and Chinese influence in Tibet 'will have been wasted if, after all, Tibet is, allowed to fall under the more formidable, because more insidious, influence of Japan'.³⁰

It was from this perspective that the India Office was forced to consider British policy should the threat of Japanese dominance in China become a reality. The 1916 memorandum unambiguously stated that, in the event of the Japanese threat to China becoming acute, Britain would have to consider pursuing an accommodating policy towards Japan's ambitions in eastern China and along the Yangtse valley, if in return she could secure Japan's agreement to the 'cordoning off' of the provinces of Yunnan and Szechuan as a British sphere. The memorandum conceded the dilemma for British policy in the Far East that would be involved, but asserted that the interests of India might well require such a solution:

How far the Japanese can be admitted to the Yangtse valley without detriment to existing British interests, or how far these interests may have to be sacrificed on the altar of world policy, are questions with which India has no direct concern. What Indian interests do require is the exclusion of the Japanese from those portions of the Chinese Empire (viz. Tibet and the border provinces of Yunnan and Szechuan) which march with the Indian frontier, and which, under the control, direct or indirect, of an energetic and aggressive power, might constitute a permanent menace to Indian security.³¹

A. J. Balfour, Foreign Secretary during the latter part of the First World War, recognized this dilemma in British far eastern policy, and conceded in a revealing letter to Sir W. Conyngham Greene, British Ambassador in Tokyo, that in the event of Britain being forced to make a choice between India's security requirements and British commercial interests in China, the latter would have to be sacrificed.³² Despite the alarms of 1916 and early 1917, in the event the Foreign Office was able to steer a delicate course in the Far East which enabled Britain to avoid any major concessions to Japan in China after February 1917. After the American entry into the war in the spring of 1917, the Japanese threat to Chinese independence gradually receded, although the Indian Government and the Peking Legation still maintained a vigilant watch on Japanese activities and intrigue in Yunnan, Szechuan and Chinese Turkestan.³³ Like the Russian threat to Tibet, the Japanese threat was in any case no more than hypothetical; but it did serve to point to the dangers of allowing the Tibetan question to drift, particularly in the context of increasing political uncertainty in China and, after 1917, in Russia.

All the government departments concerned with Tibet were anxious to settle Tibet's status with China and consolidate the increasingly friendly relations with the Tibetan

Government; but the Foreign Office, the India Office, and the Indian Government were all equally agreed that they could only 'mark time' while the war continued.³⁴ From the more immediate perspective of the Indian-Tibetan border, Charles Bell, the Political Officer at Sikkim, urged the Indian Government to take advantage of the Dalai Lama's increasingly friendly disposition towards Britain and forge bilateral links with Tibet. On 6 August 1915 Bell suggested to the Indian Government that if it still proved impossible to secure Chinese adhesion to the Simla convention, the Indian Government should immediately establish closer contacts with Tibet, enabling Tibet to defend itself against future Chinese aggression through the provision of arms supplies and training facilities: 'if we do not help her now', Bell argued, 'there is a very real and serious danger that she may fall under the complete domination of China and that we may be faced anew in an aggravated form with those dangers which the Simla Convention was intended to obviate'.³⁵ Though the India Office sympathized with Bell's arguments they agreed, along with the Indian Government, that the delicate political situation in China and the 1907 Anglo-Russian convention still inhibited any kind of forward movement in Tibet.³⁶ The Foreign Office was also reluctant to sanction any activity that might conflict with the 1907 agreement, even after Russia's collapse in 1917. When the India Office consulted the Foreign Office in September 1917 on the desirability of permitting Charles Bell to visit Lhasa in response to an invitation from the Dalai Lama, the Foreign Office felt that the time would be 'particularly inopportune' to raise issues involving the 1907 agreement; to take such immediate advantage of Russia's weakness would hardly serve to strengthen Britain's friendship with whatever government emerged from what they hoped was the temporary chaos of Russia.³⁷ In any case, the outbreak of civil war in China in 1917, which removed both Yunnan and Szechuan from central government control, eliminated the prospect of serious negotiations with China on the Tibetan issue.³⁸

While all these considerations 'froze' the issue of Tibet so far as Britain, China and Russia were concerned, developments along the Sino-Tibetan border in 1917 and 1918 did not stand still. In the summer of 1917 the Szechuanese succeeded in throwing off Yunnanese control that had been exercised in Szechuan since the breakdown of Yuan Shih-kai's control in west China in late 1915. In the ensuing internecine warlord struggle the frontier garrisons at Chamdo, Batang and Tachienlu were left largely to their own devices, and it was in these circumstances that the local general at Chamdo, Peng Jih-sheng, took advantage of a local skirmish between Chinese and Tibetan troops at the end of 1917 to launch a full-scale attack over the *de facto* border between Tibet and China, thus breaking the 1914 truce.³⁹ The attack was soon repulsed by the Tibetans, and by April 1918 Peng Jih-sheng was forced to surrender his garrison at Chamdo; the Tibetan attack did not, however, cease at that point, and by July 1918 the position of the Chinese on the whole border area was extremely precarious, and there was a very real danger that the Tibetans might succeed in taking Tachienlu and move into Szechuan province. Through the good offices of Eric Teichman, a British consular officer who was permitted to mediate in the dispute, two cease-fire agreements were eventually concluded on the frontier itself in August and October 1918, establishing a truce line between the two forces and stipulating that the truce should remain operative for one year from October 1918.⁴⁰

As the architect of this truce, Teichman felt that the agreements could provide the impetus and basis for a permanent settlement between Tibet and China, with the

existing truce line evolving into the established border between the two countries. Teichman argued that China, in her weakened condition, would be happy to accept a boundary line that did not impinge on China proper.⁴¹ Sir John Jordan, British Minister at Peking, sharply disagreed, and his response to these border developments fully illustrated his concern that Britain should not be drawn into a policy of collusion with the Tibetan Government. He was fully aware that the Chinese at Peking attributed the military gains of the Tibetans to the arms and ammunition that had been supplied to Tibet by India in 1914 and 1915, and that they regarded Teichman himself as biased in favour of the Tibetans.⁴² Far from bringing a settlement nearer, Jordan argued that hurt Chinese pride, suspicions of British-Tibetan collusion and the loss of territory 'at a time when China, our Ally, was suffering from serious internal trouble and not in a position to pay attention to those remote frontier questions' made the chance of a settlement less rather than more likely after the Tibetan military advance.⁴³

The armistice in Europe did not bring the prospect of negotiations with China over Tibet any nearer, and Jordan in Peking could in December 1918 report no evidence that the Chinese Government was interested in negotiations, while the far eastern department of the Foreign Office vetoed the notion of opening even informal discussions with the Chinese Delegation at the Paris Peace Conference.⁴⁴ The Chinese Government probably calculated that the altered climate of international relations, particularly American sympathy for Chinese aspirations, coupled with the possibility that the squabble between Canton and Peking could soon be patched up, would soon place China in a stronger position to deal with the Tibetan question. By February 1919, however, it was clear that the half-hearted negotiations between the Canton faction and the northern warlords would not succeed in unifying China, while the Shantung negotiations at Paris disabused the Chinese Government as to the extent to which they could rely on American support in the post-war world. It was probably in this frame of mind that the Chinese eventually consented to reopen negotiations on Tibet on 30 May 1919.⁴⁵

On 30 May 1919, the Chinese Foreign Ministry put forward to Jordan proposals for a settlement of the Tibetan question: these proposals suggested amendments to the Simla agreement, in particular, the inclusion of Chamdo in Inner rather than Outer Tibet, the inclusion within the treaty itself of a clear acknowledgement that Tibet formed a part of Chinese territory coupled with the insertion of a clause in the treaty to the effect that 'autonomous Tibet' recognized Chinese suzerainty, and the right of Chinese trade agents to be established at Tibetan trade marts.⁴⁶ Both Jordan and the far eastern department felt that this set of demands was surprisingly moderate,⁴⁷ and Jordan urged that he should be permitted to proceed with bilateral negotiations in Peking, obtaining for Britain the right to permanent representation in Lhasa as a counter-concession for conceding the right of a Chinese presence at Tibetan trade marts. Although the India Office disliked the notion of a Chinese presence at the trade marts near the Indian-Tibetan frontier, both the India Office and the Foreign Office agreed that Jordan should begin negotiations on the understanding that the Chinese demand for representation at trade marts should be obstructed, if possible, and that Britain should gain only the *right* to permanent representation at Lhasa without raising the issue of Britain's immediate future intentions on this question.⁴⁸

On this flexible and optimistic basis, Jordan began negotiations with the Chinese Vice-Minister for Foreign Affairs on 13 August.⁴⁹ Negotiations had barely got under

way, however, before the Chinese Government informed Jordan on 26 August of their desire to postpone negotiations 'until a stable Government had been formed, or at any rate until the return of Mr. Lu Cheng Hsiang [China's Foreign Minister] from Europe'.⁵⁰ In a state of high indignation Jordan sought explanations for this suspension of negotiations from Chen Lu, the Vice-Minister for Foreign Affairs, from the Chinese Prime Minister and from the President himself; but their 'halting excuses and lame explanations', namely, the political instability inside China, the lack of central government control over the provinces bordering on Tibet, and the unsettled state of Chinese public opinion following the transfer of the leasehold of Kiaochow from German to Japanese control at the Paris Peace Conference, were dismissed by Jordan as inadequate.⁵¹

Jordan was convinced that it was principally pressure from Japan that had forced the Chinese Government to suspend negotiations. Through June, July and August 1919, Jordan had received reports from various sources suggesting that Japan had mounted a sustained campaign designed to divert the wrath of Chinese public opinion from the Kiaochow decision reached at Paris.⁵² The most obvious evidence of such a campaign was the treatment in the Japanese press, both in China and Japan, of the negotiations between Great Britain and China over Tibet: this suggested that Britain was seeking to expand her influence over Tibet at the expense of a weak Chinese Government, and in extreme cases sought to convey the impression that Britain was attempting to secure a huge new sphere of influence in Persia, in the areas controlled by the White Russian General Denikin, and in Tibet.⁵³ More significant than this pan-Asiatic propaganda, however, were the unofficial hints from the Chinese Foreign Ministry to the British Legation that the Chinese Government had been subjected to pressure, both from the Japanese Minister in China and from the Japanese-orientated War Ministry in Peking, to suspend negotiations.⁵⁴ Jordan, who had always harboured strong suspicions of Japanese activity in China, suggested to Lord Curzon that these intrigues were 'the culmination of an effort on the part of Japan to challenge the whole position of Great Britain in Asia'. 'I venture to hope', he concluded, 'that the challenge will be accepted'.⁵⁵

The Japanese Government, however, adamantly disclaimed any responsibility for the breakdown in negotiations, and it was indeed clear that whatever influence had been exercised by Japan had been of a very indirect nature.⁵⁶ The failure of Jordan to get negotiations started again in October 1919 suggested more deep-rooted reasons for China's reluctance to arrive at a settlement over Tibet. Undoubtedly the most fundamental reason for China's *volte-face* on the issue of negotiations was the rising mood of nationalism within China itself, a mood that had been sparked by China's abject failure to defend her interests at the Paris Peace Conference, and that would be aggravated by any further negotiations involving what was regarded, however unrealistically, as Chinese territory.⁵⁷ This mood of national *revanche* affected even the *Anfu* party within the government that had been dubbed as primarily responsible for the policy of surrender to Japan; in September 1919, the Chinese Government took advantage of the temporary weakness of Russia to reassert her military position in Mongolia. The complete success of this military expedition, which culminated in November 1919 with a presidential mandate terminating Mongolian autonomy, inevitably raised hopes that a similar success could be achieved by a militant and unyielding policy with regard to Tibet.⁵⁸ China's attitude towards Mongolia clearly

indicated her determination to reaffirm 'the authority of the Republic of China on every foot of soil where her right of pre-eminent domain is incontestable'; in this unfavourable climate of opinion it was hardly surprising that Jordan's repeated requests for the resumption of negotiations towards the end of 1919 should be met by replies from China that were evasive, but with an undertone of belligerency.⁵⁹

Curzon was particularly incensed at what he described to the Chinese Minister in London on 26 November 1919 as the 'attitude of shilly-shally' of the Chinese Government, and both he and Jordan lost no time in warning the Chinese that their 'almost unfriendly' attitude to the negotiations might have serious repercussions on Anglo-Chinese relations.⁶⁰ The Chinese Government, however, remained unmoved by these threats, and in February 1920 rejected the idea of tripartite negotiations between China, Tibet and the Indian Government, an idea that had been discussed between Jordan and the Chinese Vice-Minister for Foreign Affairs; as Jordan warned on 9 December 1919,

China has now definitely decided to wait until the Tibetans grow weary of the situation and of our failure to obtain a settlement on their behalf, and then endeavour to win them back to Chinese allegiance by promises of limited autonomy and favourable treatment. The Chinese know that their position in Tibet is so bad that it can scarcely grow worse, and that time will probably work in their favour.⁶¹

Hazy reports of the arrival in Lhasa in early 1920 of a diplomatic mission from the Chinese border province of Kansu, coupled with other reports of the aggressive designs on Tibet of General Ma, the Muslim commissioner in Sining, indicated that a Chinese policy of alternate blandishments and threats of the kind that Jordan suggested was in fact emerging in the border provinces of China, even if it was not being orchestrated from Peking.⁶² These developments revealed the danger of allowing Britain's Tibetan policy to drift in the absence of negotiations with China. The interests of the Indian Government required that rapid steps should now be taken to fill the political vacuum in Tibet by developing a closer bilateral relationship with the political leadership in Tibet without reference to China. From the Foreign Office point of view, however, the pursuit of such a policy would evidently have been disastrous for Sino-British relations. At this important juncture, therefore, it would be useful to look briefly at the attitude to Tibet of the various interested government departments.

After Sir John Jordan's departure from the British Legation at Peking in early 1920, Beilby Alston, the *chargé d'affaires* succeeding Jordan, and Eric Teichman, who had, as consular officer, mediated between Tibet and China on the border in 1918, both advocated in the course of 1920 a radical change in Britain's approach to Tibet. In a memorandum on the Tibetan situation written in February 1920, Eric Teichman advocated that Britain should develop open bilateral relations with a *de facto* independent Tibet without reference to China, with permanent British representation in Lhasa, a lifting of restrictions on trading relations and a supply of arms from India sufficient for Tibet's self-defence needs; with regard to the crucial question of the status of Tibet, Teichman advocated that they should treat Tibet as a self-governing dominion of China, analogous to the self-governing dominions of the British Empire.⁶³ Beilby Alston fully supported these suggested outlines of policy, as he made clear in

communications to the Foreign Office on 27 April, 14 May, and 21 May 1920.⁶⁴ The most important and radical aspect of Teichman's and Alston's suggestions was their recommendation that the political and economic 'sterilization' of Tibet should be ended; confident, because of the 'geographical position of Central Tibet, which looks out on India and turns its back on China', that Britain's political and economic position would be unassailable, they advocated what amounted to a policy of 'open door' in Tibet. Clearly, both felt that by ending the network of restrictive treaties designed to insulate Tibet from the outside world Britain would be given a free hand to establish a predominating position in Tibet, while Tibet itself would emerge as a genuinely independent state.⁶⁵

The India Office agreed with Beilby Alston that a permanent British representation in Lhasa was desirable in the long run, but the Indian Government (supported by Charles Bell, the recently retired Political Officer at Sikkim) disagreed fundamentally with Alston's suggestions. Naturally, the Indian Government agreed with the view that a strong bilateral relationship should be established without delay with the Tibetan Government; where it disagreed with Alston was over the character that this relationship should assume. From a strategic point of view, the Indian Government preferred a continued policy of 'sterilization' to the risks of Russian and possibly Japanese intrusion in Tibet that the 'open door' policy of Alston's would have entailed.⁶⁶ Both the Indian Government and Charles Bell were, furthermore, fully aware that the Tibetan Government itself would be reluctant to accept any significant widening of diplomatic, political and economic relationships between itself and foreign powers. The establishment of permanent foreign missions in Lhasa and the opening up of trade relationships would, they argued, soon arouse the latent anti-foreign suspicions and religious susceptibilities of the populace of Lhasa.⁶⁷ 'So long as Tibet wishes to keep her door shut', argued the Indian Government on 11 May 1921, 'we see no reason in self-interest, or otherwise, to attempt to force them . . . to do so would be to jeopardise our influence over her, for it springs largely from our forbearance to foist ourselves upon her'.⁶⁸ The Indian Government was, therefore, interested in a far less ambitious policy, with only temporary missions from India to Lhasa and, in practical terms, a sufficient supply of arms to enable Tibet to 'live her own life and to keep China at arm's length'.⁶⁹

In essence, the Indian Government desired to maintain and strengthen the *status quo* in Tibet: 'As [the] matter now stands, we could wish for no better neighbour on our north-east frontier than present-day Tibet, keeping China at arm's length and leaning towards us for her modest requirements.'⁷⁰ So long as India was capable of helping Tibet towards practical self-reliance, it seemed to the Indian Government unprofitable and untimely to raise the wider issue of Tibet's status.

The overriding concern of the Far Eastern Department of the Foreign Office was that the wider perspective of Britain's policy and interests in China should be kept in mind while framing a policy towards Tibet. Briefly, the Far Eastern Department and Sir John Jordan, who continued to advise the Foreign Office on Tibetan affairs after his retirement from Peking in March 1920, stressed the point that Britain's continued friendship with China was more important for Britain's future in Asia than upholding the buffer status of Tibet. At the time of the Simla agreement, Jordan had warned that bilateral agreements between Britain and Tibet would 'react very unfavourably on our railway and mining concessions' in China;⁷¹ in the post-war period, Jordan and

the Far Eastern Department were even more sensitive to the rising mood of Chinese nationalism and warned that measures such as the supply of arms to the Tibetan army would, in the words of Miles Lampson of the Far Eastern Department, arouse 'intense anti-British feeling throughout China'.⁷² From this perspective, the Far Eastern Department dissented from the Indian Government's view that direct but informal relations should be developed between India and Tibet without taking China into consideration. Nor did the Far Eastern Department agree with Alston that it was desirable, or indeed possible, to force China to accept Britain's view of Tibet's status as a self-governing dominion.⁷³ Jordan in particular stressed that the vital factors were China's unyielding insistence on Tibet's subordinate status and her capacity *in the long term* to impose her will on Tibet. Consequently, Jordan held that deference should be made to China's view of Tibet's status and that no stable agreement could be reached on Tibet's status except through the medium of the Chinese Government.⁷⁴

The Foreign Office was not, however, united in its view on Tibet, for Lord Curzon and Lord Hardinge, both of them former Viceroy of India, were sympathetic to the arguments of the Indian Government. Like the latter, they held the view that closer Indian-Tibetan links should be forged even at the expense of China's friendship; as Curzon impatiently put it, 'Tibet cannot be permanently denied the advantage of communications with [the] outside world by the obstructiveness of China'.⁷⁵ Curzon had undoubtedly been considerably irked at the behaviour of the Chinese in first proposing terms for a settlement and then withdrawing from negotiations; but it is also evident that Curzon was at this time far more pessimistic than the members of the Far Eastern Department about the validity of hinging far eastern policy on a country so weak and disunited as China. Like the Indian Government, Curzon and Hardinge were anxious to build Britain's policy towards Asia on the basis of existing realities, not on remote contingencies such as the emergence of a powerful and united China.

Despite these divisions of opinion on long-term policy, the Foreign Office was in general agreement that the Indian Government would have to make some counter to the mission despatched to Lhasa from the Chinese province of Kansu in the early months of 1920. The Anglo-Russian Agreement of 1907 still, however, stood in the way of the despatch of an official British mission to Lhasa to counter-balance the Kansu mission. Accordingly, it was at last agreed in late March 1920 that the 1907 agreement with Russia had 'lapsed', and the India Office was informed on 9 April 1920 that the Foreign Office would no longer object to the despatch of an Indian Government official to Lhasa on a 'special and temporary' mission in order to keep an eye on the activities of the Kansu mission whilst in Lhasa.⁷⁶ Thus, belatedly and almost casually, a major breakthrough in the development of closer Anglo-Tibetan relations was achieved, and an obstacle that had since 1907 stood in the way of a forward policy in Tibet was removed. A major factor in this decision no longer to recognize the validity of the 1907 treaty was the failure of the White Russians to remove the Bolsheviks from power; until this had become clear, however, the Foreign Office had been reluctant to exploit Russia's state of anarchy in order to advance Britain's interests in Tibet.

One major obstacle still stood in the way of the despatch of a British mission to Lhasa, namely the question of whether or not arms supplies to the Tibetan Government should be resumed as part of the development of bilateral relations with Tibet. For their part, the Indian Government and the India Office insisted that to send an

envoy to Lhasa with no concrete promise of arms would destroy the whole purpose of the mission.⁷⁷ The Foreign Office, however, consistently objected to the idea of supplying arms to Tibet, primarily because such action could have been construed as a breach of the arms embargo agreement concluded in the spring of 1919, whereby the major powers mutually agreed not to supply arms to China until some semblance of political stability had been achieved. The main purpose of this embargo agreement had been the restraint of Japan's armaments policy towards China, and it was strongly felt in the Far Eastern Department that any supply of arms to Tibet (which could be construed as part of Chinese territory) would give Japan sufficient excuse to resume arms supplies to the Chinese Government; as Victor Wellesley of the Far Eastern Department put it, such action would 'have the most disastrous consequences for British policy and interests generally in China'.⁷⁸

Eventually, the whole problem of the supply of arms and ammunition to Tibet was thrashed out in a meeting between members of the India Office and the Far Eastern Department, with Sir John Jordan present, on 22 July 1920. At this meeting, the Foreign Office view against any immediate supply of arms to the Tibetan Government prevailed, and it was agreed that the most that could be done at the present time was to extract a written assurance from the Chinese Government of their non-aggressive intentions on the Sino-Tibetan border, which could then be conveyed to the Tibetan Government by the British mission to Lhasa.⁷⁹ The anxiety of the Foreign Office to hold back the Indian Government on the arms question was undoubtedly influenced by the political and military situation in China in the summer of 1920; in July 1920, the pro-Japanese military clique headed by Tuan Chi-jui was overthrown by a combination of warlords, and the Foreign Office was anxious to wait and test the new political atmosphere of Peking before launching radical initiatives in the Tibetan sphere.⁸⁰

Accordingly, the India Office on 15 October 1920, in a telegram to the Indian Government, sanctioned a mission from India to Lhasa if the Indian Government felt such a mission to be necessary, but warned that the mission would not at present be empowered to give any assurances whatever on the question of arms. The scope of the mission was initially strictly limited to that of investigating the extent of Chinese influence in Tibet, and of explaining to the Dalai Lama British policy and the reasons for the failure of the negotiations with the Chinese.⁸¹ The Indian Government appointed Charles Bell, recently retired from the post of Political Officer in Sikkim and a personal friend of the Dalai Lama, to head the Lhasa mission, which set out from the India-Tibet border on 1 November 1920, arriving in Lhasa about a fortnight later.⁸²

Despite his very limited brief, Charles Bell had a particularly favourable reception from the Dalai Lama, and one of the principal hopes of the British Government was that the news of this would encourage the Chinese to re-open negotiations.⁸³ On his return from leave on 15 December 1920, however, Alston found that the Chinese Government, although patently alarmed at the news of Bell's presence in Lhasa, were as reluctant as ever to re-open negotiations. Alston's failure to get negotiations moving with the Chinese had increasingly to be contrasted through the winter and spring of 1920-21 with the evident success of Charles Bell's mission to the Dalai Lama; indeed, Bell was able to persuade the Indian Government to allow him to stay in Lhasa for a far longer period than had originally been intended, in view of the uniformly favourable attitude towards Bell of the main Tibetan political leaders.⁸⁴

In this context of Tibetan friendship and Chinese intransigence, it was hardly surprising that, when Bell wrote to the Indian Government on 19 January and 21 February 1921, urging the conclusion of some form of agreement with the Tibetan Government without reference to China, his views had a favourable reception.⁸⁵ In these letters, Bell particularly warned that any further delay over the question of supplying arms to Tibet while waiting for a response from China might well drive the Tibetan Government to seek arms from Japan, and he pointed out that any form of assurance from the Chinese Government on the maintenance of peace on the Sino-Tibetan border would be regarded by the Tibetans as worthless. What the Tibetans demanded, Bell concluded, was either a comprehensive settlement along the lines of the Simla agreement, or British support, both in diplomatic and military terms, for a fully autonomous Tibet; if Britain were to fail to provide either of these solutions, argued Bell, then British influence in Tibet would immediately evaporate.⁸⁶ Both the India Office and the Indian Government agreed with Bell that prompt action was now needed, although the latter continued to emphasize the point that recognition of Tibet's *de facto* independence should not imply a concrete Indian Government commitment to Tibet beyond limited aid in terms of arms supplies and training facilities.⁸⁷ Accordingly, the Indian Government on 11 May 1921 made the following suggestions regarding British policy:

If His Majesty's Government accepts it, it is for consideration whether the time has not come for us to adopt [a] firm and open attitude towards China. Thus, when informing Chinese Government of termination of Bell's friendly mission, we might venture to suggest that [the] Minister might tell them that we definitely recognise Tibet's autonomy; that we are therefore allowing her as an autonomous state to import arms through India up to [a] reasonable limit, on a written undertaking that they will be employed purely [?for] self-defence; that we are prepared, as stated in close of Simla Conference, to grant Tibet such further facilities as may be necessary to preserve her autonomy, and shall certainly do so at once if the Chinese attempt to cross Teichman's provisional frontier.⁸⁸

In view of the consistent refusal of the Chinese Government to resume negotiations, there was clearly no alternative left for the Foreign Office but to act on the basis of the Indian Government's recommendations, with certain modifications. On the afternoon of 26 August, Curzon delivered a virtual ultimatum to Wellington Koo, the Chinese Minister in London, warning him that unless negotiations on Tibet were speedily resumed, 'His Majesty's Government do not feel justified in withholding any longer their recognition of the status of Tibet as an autonomous state under the suzerainty of China, and intend dealing on this basis with Tibet in the future'.⁸⁹ Curzon elaborated on this note by warning Koo verbally that unless negotiations were resumed within one month, the British Government would 'enter into closer relations with the Tibetans' giving them 'any reasonable assistance they might require in the development and protection of their country.'⁹⁰

The period of one month had been previously agreed between the departments, since this would enable Bell to wait for the Chinese reaction to the British note, and report accordingly to the Tibetan Government before his departure from Lhasa. The

Chinese Government, however, failed to respond positively even to this quasi-ultimatum, and requested a delay in the re-opening of negotiations over Tibet until the impending Conference on naval and far eastern affairs, due to meet in the United States in the autumn of 1921, had been completed. Curzon reacted with extreme irritation to this fresh Chinese excuse for delay in the Tibetan negotiations, but from Peking Alston suggested that Chinese difficulties were at this stage genuine, since Chinese preparation for the impending conference was already absorbing all of China's diplomatic energies.⁹¹ Accordingly, on 19 October Alston conveyed to the Chinese Minister for Foreign Affairs Britain's 'reluctant' acceptance of the need to postpone negotiations, on the clear understanding that negotiations would be resumed immediately after the conclusion of the Washington Conference.⁹²

Despite this further delay in negotiations, Bell was instructed to proceed along the basis agreed, that is, to inform the Tibetan Government 'that His Majesty's Government will now in pursuance of their policy of granting the Tibetan Government reasonable assistance in the development and protection of their country allow [the] Tibetan Government to import munitions in instalments at adequate intervals'.⁹³ On 11 October 1921, just before his final departure from Lhasa, Bell conveyed this information to the Dalai Lama, coupled with an explanation for the further delay in negotiations with the Chinese Government and a warning that the Tibetan Government should not, in the interim before negotiations were opened, seek to alter the military *status quo*.

* * *

In the last resort, therefore, the British Government did not allow Chinese procrastination to stand in the way of the golden chance of forging close relations between Tibet and Britain that Bell's highly successful mission afforded. As far as the Indian Government and the India Office were concerned, the position of Anglo-Tibetan relations at the conclusion of Bell's mission was extremely satisfactory; the danger that Tibet might fall increasingly under Chinese influence while British policy remained in an *impasse* had been averted, and Tibet's position as a stable, independent and friendly buffer state had been greatly strengthened. In addition to these achievements (achievements which only involved the Indian Government in minimal obligations) the lapse of the Anglo-Russian treaty of 1907 freed Britain's hands with regard to Tibet and ended the danger of a future Russian Government seeking to extract concessions from Britain in Afghanistan in return for Russian concessions in Tibet.

The Foreign Office, on the other hand, had far less reason to be satisfied with the diplomatic position reached at the end of Bell's mission. Without any form of agreement with China, the status of Tibet was still unresolved, and this failure on Britain's part to settle the Tibetan question with China, both before and, in the event, after the Washington Conference, meant that the issue of Tibet was to remain a permanent irritant in future Anglo-Chinese relations. Britain's threat to deal with Tibet in the future as an autonomous state 'without any reference to China' merely exacerbated the problems that Tibet might pose for future Anglo-Chinese relations.⁹⁴

The Foreign Office was acutely aware of the fact that China was the essential key to a long-term solution to the problem of the status of Tibet; the evolution of British

policy towards China in this period was, therefore, a vital factor in determining the attitude of the Foreign Office towards Tibet. From the beginning of the century Britain had relied in Asia principally on the Anglo-Japanese alliance which, while it served admirably to safeguard Britain's position in east Asia during the First World War, inevitably involved at least some acquiescence in Japan's increasingly aggressive policy in China. By the end of the First World War, however, pressure was increasing, from the British Legation in Peking, the Far Eastern Department of the Foreign Office, and from the British commercial community in China itself, to shift the main emphasis of British policy in Asia from one of reliance on Japan to closer links with the United States and with a renascent China. It is within this overall context that the reluctance in 1919 and 1920 of the Foreign Office to alienate China over the Tibetan question should be seen.

As China's endemic weakness and unreliability in negotiations became ever more apparent during 1920 and 1921, so the Foreign Office, and Lord Curzon in particular, became increasingly pessimistic about China's future and dubious about the wisdom of framing any policy (including the Tibetan policy) on the fragile hypothesis of a Chinese revival of power. As Curzon trenchantly expressed it on 25 September 1921, just before the Washington Conference:

China is the rock on which many barques will founder because while we are all in theory in favour not merely of formulating but of carrying our broad and generous principles, you have a country at this moment one of the least united, and a government one of the feeblest, on the face of the Globe, and to expect that China in her present state of internal dissolution will implement any pledge, or merit any favour, is futile.⁹⁵

However much the Foreign Office may have wished to conclude an agreement with China over Tibet which would have appeased China's sensitivities while at the same time safeguarding Indian security, China's intransigence and at the same time her weakness gave the former no alternative but to sanction a policy of close Anglo-Tibetan relations without reference to China.

The status of Tibet was therefore left in a highly ambiguous state, and remained so until after the Second World War and China's resurgence. By the end of 1921, Britain in theory still recognized China's 'suzerainty' over Tibet, but in reality Tibet was now avowedly treated as an autonomous state capable of conducting its own internal and external affairs without any interference from the 'suzerain' power. Had Britain been able to draw China to the conference table in the period 1914-21, there seems little doubt that the definition of Tibet's autonomy would have been more sharply curtailed and China's suzerain position would have been more clearly defined; this was a price that Britain would have willingly paid for a definitive settlement of Tibet's status. After the summer of 1919, however, China showed no interest whatever in negotiations, and the reasons for this are not hard to find. In the first place, the Chinese Government could not afford in the years immediately after Japan's seizure of Kiaochow to antagonize Chinese nationalist opinion by what would be seen as a further cession of Chinese territory; in the second place, the reconquest (albeit shortlived) of Mongolia by China in 1919 hardened Chinese opinion against any agreement with Great Britain that might involve the curtailing of residual Chinese

rights in Tibet, for it was precisely these residual rights that might in the future provide the justification for the absorption of Tibet by a renascent China.

China's refusal to negotiate would, therefore, suggest that the Chinese Government felt that time was on their side in the Tibetan question. The long-term development of relations between China, British India and Tibet also influenced very considerably the views of those responsible for framing Britain's Tibetan policy, but on this key question there were at this time important differences of opinion. Eric Teichman, a junior member of the Peking Legation but one who nevertheless had acquired a direct knowledge of both Tibetan and Mongolian affairs, was the main advocate of the view that Tibet would in the future naturally orientate towards India for economic, political and geographical reasons; in a report from Urga, the capital of Mongolia, written in August 1920, Teichman suggested that if the Indian Government had in the immediate past treated Tibet

in the same open way in which the Russians behaved towards Mongolia it seems fairly certain that our relations with the Tibetans, coupled with the development of Tibet as an autonomous State, would by now have been such that the Tibetan question would have settled itself, whether the Chinese had formally come to terms or not.⁹⁶

In so far as future Anglo-Tibetan relations were concerned, Teichman went on to assert that

provided we agree to permit them to develop their country with the assistance of foreign enterprise from India, and treat them as ordinary friendly neighbours instead of sterilising them as unwilling hermits [the Tibetans] would assuredly, owing to their geographical position and natural connection with India, *drift permanently and definitely away from China towards us.*⁹⁷

This point of view found an echo to some extent in Curzon's pessimism, already noted above, about the possibilities of a revival of China. But strangely enough, Charles Bell, who had an equal experience of Tibetan affairs from the Indian side to that of Teichman's experience of Tibetan and Mongolian affairs from the Chinese side, took the exactly opposite viewpoint from that of Teichman. Bell, for all his passionate advocacy of British-Tibetan friendship, argued that the racial and religious links between the Himalayan states (that is, Tibet, Bhutan and Sikkim) and the Sino-Mongolian area were far more significant than economic and geographical links between India and Tibet.⁹⁸ In a note entitled 'Probable effects of Home Rule in India on Tibet, Bhutan and Sikkim', written on 2 October 1917, Bell argued that the link between Tibet and India depended solely on the British presence; only so long as Britain assumed responsibility (particularly military responsibility) for Indian affairs, could the friendly links between the Indian and Tibetan Governments be maintained; once the Indians 'obtain self-government, Tibet, Bhutan and Sikkim, differing as they do from India in both race and religion, will strongly gravitate back towards China'.⁹⁹

Whatever importance the Indian Government may have attached to the debate over the relative importance of Tibet's cultural and racial leanings to the north and east, and their political and economic leanings to the south, there is no doubt that the

issue of eventual Indian independence was of crucial significance in their assessment of future Indian-Tibetan relations. By the end of the First World War, Britain was committed to a policy that would eventually lead to self-government in India, and therefore inevitably to a reduction of British influence and strategic interest in the defence of India. Quite as much as Bell, the Indian Government was acutely conscious of the implications of these long-term factors for Britain's policy towards Tibet, and it is therefore hardly surprising that both Bell and the Indian Government should have opposed anything more than a very tentative forward policy in Tibet in 1921. As the Indian Government warned in May 1921: 'we feel no temptation, least of all at this difficult time, to launch forth on a more ambitious policy with an unknown enlargement of our commitments'.¹⁰⁰ In this context of eventual Indian self-government it is ironic but hardly surprising that Charles Bell, the foremost 'Tibetophile' of his day, should in 1921 have supported the Indian Government point of view that, while every effort should be made to forge Anglo-Tibetan friendship, too close a reliance by Tibet on British support was not in the long-term interests of either Britain or Tibet.

Notes

- 1 Alfred P. Rubin, 'The Position of Tibet in International Law', *China Quarterly*, No. 35 (July-September 1968), p. 119.
- 2 India Office Records, India Office Library, London [I.O.L.], Political Secret Memoranda, B. 448, L/P and S/18, p. 1.
- 3 *Ibid.*
- 4 *Ibid.*, p. 2.
- 5 Eric Teichman, *Travels of a Consular Officer in Eastern Tibet* (Cambridge, 1922), pp. 1-4.
- 6 *Ibid.*, pp. 9-12.
- 7 Eric Teichman, *Travels of a Consular Officer in Eastern Tibet*, pp. 18-33.
- 8 See, for example, F. M. Bailey, *No Passport to Tibet* (London, 1957), pp. 75-6.
- 9 E. Teichman, *Travels*, p. 33.
- 10 William F. O'Connor, *On the Frontier and Beyond* (London, 1931), p. 27; P. Mehra, *The Younghusband Expedition* (London, 1968), p. 357.
- 11 For terms of the 1904 agreement, see J. V. A. MacMurray (ed.), *Treaties and Agreements with and Concerning China, 1894-1919*, Vol. 1 (1894-1911) (New York, 1921), pp. 577-81.
- 12 O'Connor, *On the Frontier*, p. 107.
- 13 Foreign Office Memorandum, 8-3-07, Political and Secret Memoranda, B. 163, L/P and S/18.
- 14 P. L. Mehra, 'Tibet and Russian Intrigue', *Journal of the Royal Central Asian Society*, Vol. 45 (1958), pp. 28-42.
- 15 Teichman, *Travels*, pp. 30-3.
- 16 Alastair Lamb, *The McMahon Line: A Study in the Relations between India, China and Tibet, 1904 to 1914*, Vol. 2 (London, 1966), pp. 333-4.
- 17 Bailey, *No Passport to Tibet*, p. 247.
- 18 Charles Alfred Bell, Tibet Note-Book (British Museum Typescript), Vol. 1 p. 16.
- 19 Charles Alfred Bell, *Tibet, Past and Present* (reprint, Oxford, 1968), p. 103.
- 20 India Office Records, Report of McMahon on the Tripartite Negotiations, Enclosure 5, 464/13, L/P and S/10/344.
- 21 Bell, Tibet Note Book, Vol. 1, p. 53.
- 22 Tieh Tseng-li, *Tibet, Today and Yesterday* (New York, 1960), p. 136. The territory of Inner Tibet was to be placed under Chinese administration but not absorbed within China proper.
- 23 Alastair Lamb, *The China-India Border: The Origins of the Disputed Boundaries* (London, 1964), pp. 142-7.

- 24 Charles Alfred Bell, *Portrait of the Dalai Lama* (London, 1946), pp. 206–7; Jordan Grey, 31–5–14, 464/13, L/P and S/10/344.
- 25 MacMurray (ed.), *Treaties and Agreements*, Vol. 1, pp. 581–91.
- 26 K. Gupta, 'The McMahon Line, 1911–1945. The British Legacy', *China Quarterly*, No. 47 (1971), pp. 522–3.
- 27 Lord Crewe to Lord Hardinge, 3–10–12, Hardinge MSS, 74, f. 141; E. L. Woodward and Rohan Butler (eds.), *Documents on British Foreign Policy 1919–1939*, First Series, Vol. VI (London, 1956), p. 656; India Office to Indian Government, 16–7–14, 464/13, L/P and S/10/344.
- 28 Jordan to Macleay, 16–4–18, Jordan MSS, FO 3501/16.
- 29 Memorandum by the Secretary of the Political Department, India Office, 16–5–16, 1036/711, FO 371/53388.
- 30 *Ibid.*, FO 371/53388.
- 31 *Ibid.*
- 32 Balfour to Greene, 13–2–17, 1036/71 1, FO 371/53388.
- 33 Jordan to Balfour, 31–7–18, 162365/2567, FO 371/3181; P. T. Etherton, *In the Heart of Asia* (London, 1925), p. 125; British Trade Agent, Gyantse, to Indian Government, 1–2–16, 5062/13/pt. 5, L/P and S/10/435.
- 34 Indian Government to Bell, 3–9–15, 464/13, L/P and S/10/344.
- 35 Bell to Indian Government, 6–8–15, Bell MSS, EUR. F 80/5e. 2o, I.O.L.
- 36 Indian Government to Bell, 3–9–15, 464/13, L/P and S/10/344.
- 37 See Far Eastern Department minutes to I.O. to F.O., 1–9–17, 171722/2904, FO 371/2909; F.O. to I.O., 7–9–17, 3612/3260/17, L/P and S/10/715.
- 38 Far Eastern Department minutes to I.O. to F.O., 3–12–17, 230146/2904, FO 371/2909; F.O. to I.O., 21–12–17, 5125/3260/17, L/P and S/10/715.
- 39 Louis M. King, *China in Turmoil: Studies in Personality* (London, 1927), pp. 159–63.
- 40 Jordan to Balfour, 20–4–18, 70988/2567, FO 371/3180; Jordan to Balfour, 17–11–18, 189969/2567, FO 371/3181; Political and Secret Memoranda, B. 300, L/P and S/18. The truce line gave Chamdo, Draya, Markham and Derge to the Tibetans, while Batang, Nyarong, Litang and Kanze remained in Chinese hands.
- 41 Teichman to Indian Government, 10–3–19, 5062/13/13pt. 6, L/P and S/10/436; Teichman to Jordan, 21–8–18, 3260/1917/pt/1, L/P and S/10/713.
- 42 R. M. Macleay to A. Hirtzel, 9–9–18, 3901/3260/17, L/P and S/10/714; Indian Government to India Office, 10–9–18, 4074/3260/1917, L/P and S/10/714. On 13 September 1918, Jordan made his feelings about the Tibetan Government perfectly clear; he urged that the 'Dalai Lama, who is an arch-intriguer and a most unscrupulous and dangerous person should be warned to drop his ambitious schemes of conquest on [the] Chinese border'. J. E. Shuckburgh of the Political and Secret Department of the India Office demurred at Jordan's caustic assessment of the Dalai Lama. Jordan to Balfour, 13–9–18, 4074/3260/17, L/P and S/10/714; Minute by Shuckburgh to *ibid.*, 17–9–18, L/P and S/10/714.
- 43 Jordan to Curzon, 2–4–19, 79285/4004, FO 371/3688. China declared war against the Central Powers in August 1917.
- 44 Far Eastern Department minutes to I.O. to F.O., 24–1–19, 13940/4004, FO 371/3688; 'Indian Desiderata for the Peace Settlement', Political Department, India Office, 4–12–18, 212/3260/17, L/P and S/10/713. In an interview with the acting Minister for Foreign Affairs, Chen Lu, on 6 December 1918, Sir John Jordan took the opportunity to deplore in general terms 'the persistent desire of China to sacrifice the substance for the shadow, which has led to the criminal neglect of China proper while strength and money were wasted in futile efforts to save nominal suzerainty over outlying territory such as Burma, Tonquin, Formosa, Loochow Islands, Mongolia and Tibet'; Chen Lu in reply asserted that 'the modern Chinese attached even greater importance to what remained of these outlying islands in view of their possible use for the increasing population of China in the future. China', he concluded, 'like all states of the present day regarded the preservation of reserve space as vital'. Jordan to Balfour, 13–12–18, 23260/4004, FO 371/3688.
- 45 Jordan to Curzon, 31–5–19, 82499/4004, FO 371/3688.
- 46 *Ibid.*

- 47 See comment by Sir John Jordan at a lecture by M. E. Willoughby, 'The Relation of Tibet to China', *Journal of the Central Asian Society*, Vol. XI (1924), Pt 111, p. 201.
- 48 Memorandum by J. E. Shuckburgh, Political Department, India Office, 14-7-19, 305/3260, L/P and S/10/716; Foreign Office to India Office, 30-7-19, 105308/4004, FO 371/3688.
- 49 *Documents on British Foreign Policy*, Vol. VI, p. 691.
- 50 *Ibid.*, p. 693.
- 51 *Ibid.*, pp. 693-5.
- 52 Foreign Office Memorandum, 11-7-19, 634/1/7, FO 608/210.
- 53 *North-China Herald*, 6-12-19, p. 607.
- 54 *Documents on British Foreign Policy*, Vol. VI, pp. 694, 715-6.
- 55 *Ibid.*, p. 694.
- 56 *Ibid.*, pp. 719-21.
- 57 *Ibid.*, p. 782.
- 58 Jordan to Curzon, 24-11-19, 156996/124334, FO 371/3701.
- 59 Political Intelligence Department Memorandum, 8-4-20, CP 1113, CAB 24/104; Jordan to Curzon, 20-11-19, 155695/4004, FO 371/3689.
- 60 *Documents on British Foreign Policy*, Vol. VI, pp. 859-60; Jordan noted in a telegram of 20 January 1920: 'An appeal which the President [made to] me today regarding [the] position in Siberia as affecting Manchuria gave me an opportunity of reminding him that he could not expect much assistance from us while Tibetan situation remained unsettled.' *Ibid.*, Vol. VI, p. 947.
- 61 Jordan to Curzon, 9-12-19, 177338/4004, FO 371/3689.
- 62 *Documents on British Foreign Policy*, Vol. VI, pp. 1011-12, 1073.
- 63 Memorandum by Eric Teichman on Tibet, 29-2-20, 4365/3260, L/P and S/10/716.
- 64 Alston to Curzon, 27-4-20, 3250/3260, L/P and S/10/716; Alston to Curzon, 14-5-20, 4004/3260, L/P and S/10/716; Alston to Curzon, 21-5-20, 1641/22, FO 371/5316.
- 65 Alston to Curzon, 21-5-20, 1641/22, FO 371/5316.
- 66 India Office to Foreign Office, 14-5-20, 850/22, FO371/5315.
- 67 Indian Government to India Office, 11-5-21, 2336/3260, L/P and S/10/717; Bell to Indian Government, 9-5-21, Bell MSS, EUR F 80/5e. 22. I.O.L.
- 68 Indian Government to India Office, 11-5-21, 2336/3260, L/P and S/10/717.
- 69 *Ibid.*
- 70 Indian Government to India Office, 11-5-21, 2336/3260, L/P and S/10/717.
- 71 Jordan to Grey, 31-5-14, 464/13, L/P and S/10/344.
- 72 Minute by M. Lampson, 21-10-20, 2407/22, FO 371/5316.
- 73 See minute by Sir John Jordan to Alston to Curzon, 27-4-20, 677/22, FO 371/5315.
- 74 See, for example, Jordan to Curzon, 27-11-19, 531/3260, L/P and S/10/716.
- 75 Minute by Lord Curzon, 19-8-20, 1864/22, FO 371/5316.
- 76 Curzon to Lampson, 1-4-20, 222/22, FO 371/5314; see also minutes of Far Eastern Department, 222/22, FO 371/5314; Foreign Office to India Office, 9-4-20, 2847/3260, L/P and S/10/716.
- 77 Indian Government to India Office, 23-4-20, 3256/03260, L/P and S/10/716; Political and Secret Memoranda, B. 344, L/P and S/10/18.
- 78 Minute by V. Wellesley, 14-5-20, 834/22, FO 371/5315; as Curzon wrote in a memorandum on 27 June 1920, arming Tibet 'might on the one hand alienate China, and on the other give a handle to Japan'. Memorandum by Lord Curzon, 27-6-20, 834/22, FO 371/5315.
- 79 Minutes of meeting held in the Foreign Office, 22-7-20, 2441/22, FO 371/5316.
- 80 Minute by J. E. Shuckburgh, 1-9-20, 6566/3260, L/P and S/10/716; Clive to Curzon, 26-8-20, 1979/1979, FO 371/5344.
- 81 India Office to Indian Government, 15-10-20, 7327/3260, L/P and S/10/716; India Office to Foreign Office, 26-10-20, 2593/22, FO 371/5317.
- 82 Bell, *Tibet, Past and Present*, pp. 177-9.
- 83 As Miles Lampson put it on 1 December 1920: '... one of the indirect results of Mr. Bell's visit may be fresh overtures from the Chinese to negotiate a settlement of the Tibetan Question'. Minute by Lampson, 1-12-20. 2949/22, FO 371/5317.

- 84 Charles Bell, Diary (British Museum, typescript) Vol. VII, p. 49. The Indian Government initially objected to the idea of a lengthy stay by Bell in Lhasa on the interesting grounds that ‘the longer he stays [in Lhasa] the more difficult will he find it to leave and the greater [the] danger of the Tibetan Government trying to force our hands over [a] permanent envoy at Lhasa’; the Indian Government were clearly worried about Bell’s pro-Tibetan proclivities. Indian Government to India Office, 31–12–20, 23/3260, L/P and S/10/717.
- 85 Bell to Indian Government, 21–2–21, Bell MSS, EUR F 80/5e. 21, I.O.L.; Bell to Indian Government, 19–1–21, 1344/3260, L/P and S/10/717.
- 86 Bell to Indian Government, 21–2–21, Bell MSS, EUR F 80/5e. 21, I.O.L.
- 87 India Office to Foreign Office, 14–5–21, 1854/59, FO 371/6608.
- 88 See enclosure in *ibid.* ‘Teichman’s provisional frontier’ was the truce line negotiated between local Tibetan and Chinese forces in mid-1918 with the mediation of Eric Teichman.
- 89 R. Butler and J. P. T. Bury (eds.), *Documents on British Foreign Policy*, First series, Vol. XIV (London, 1966), p. 387.
- 90 *Ibid.*, p. 384.
- 91 Minute by Curzon, 14–9–21, Alston to Curzon, 8–9–21, 3380/59, FO 371/6609; Alston to Tyrrell, 8–9–21, 3385/59, FO 371/6609.
- 92 Foreign Office to India Office, 29–9–21, 4406/3260, L/P and S/10/717.
- 93 Indian Government to India Office, 19–10–21, 4689/3260, L/P and S/10/717; specifically, this agreement over arms included the import of 10 mountain guns, 20 machine guns, and 10,000 rifles with ammunition: ‘by 1933 all of this material had been supplied by the Government of India’. Political and Secret Memoranda, B. 448, L/P and S/18.
- 94 *Documents on British Foreign Policy*, Vol. XIV, p. 433.
- 95 Curzon to Geddes, 25–9–21, Curzon MSS, FO 800/158.
- 96 *Documents on British Foreign Policy*, Vol. XIV, p. 135.
- 97 *Ibid.*, p. 136. Emphasis added.
- 98 Bell, *Tibet, Past and Present*, p. 244.
- 99 Bell, Tibet Note-Book, Vol. 2, p. 30.
- 100 Indian Government to India Office, 11–5–21, 2336/3260, L/P and S/10/717.

THE DALAI LAMA'S 1913 PROCLAMATION

Tsepon W. D. Shakabpa (trans.)

Source: Tsepon W. D. Shakabpa, *Tibet: A Political History*, New York: Potala Publications, 1984 (first published, New Haven: Yale University Press, 1967), pp. 246–8.

Shortly after his return to Lhasa [from exile in India, in January 1913], the Dalai Lama issued a proclamation to all his officials and subjects throughout Tibet. This proclamation, . . . [is] . . . regarded in Tibet as [a] formal declaration of independence. This proclamation is dated the eighth day of the first month of the Water-Ox year (1913):

I, the Dalai Lama, most omniscient possessor of the Buddhist faith, whose title was conferred by the Lord Buddha's command from the glorious land of India, speak to you as follows:

I am speaking to all classes of Tibetan people. Lord Buddha, from the glorious country of India, prophesied that the reincarnations of Avalokiteśvara, through successive rulers from the early religious kings to the present day, would look after the welfare of Tibet.

During the time of Genghis Khan and Altan Khan of the Mongols, the Ming dynasty of the Chinese, and the Ch'ing dynasty of the Manchus, Tibet and China co-operated on the basis of benefactor and priest relationship. A few years ago, the Chinese authorities in Szechuan and Yunnan endeavored to colonize our territory. They brought large numbers of troops into central Tibet on the pretext of policing the trade marts. I, therefore, left Lhasa with my ministers for the Indo-Tibetan border, hoping to clarify to the Manchu Emperor by wire that the existing relationship between Tibet and China had been that of patron and priest and had not been based on the subordination of one to the other. There was no other choice for me but to cross the border, because Chinese troops were following with the intention of taking me alive or dead.

On my arrival in India, I dispatched several telegrams to the Emperor; but his reply to my demands was delayed by corrupt officials at Peking. Meanwhile, the Manchu Empire collapsed. The Tibetans were encouraged to expel the Chinese from central Tibet. I, too, returned safely to my rightful and sacred country, and I am now in the course of driving out the remnants of Chinese troops from Do Kham in eastern Tibet. Now, the Chinese intention of colonizing Tibet under the patron-priest relationship has faded like a rainbow in the sky. Having once again achieved for ourselves a period

of happiness and peace, I have now allotted to all of you the following duties to be carried out without negligence:

- (1) Peace and happiness in this world can only be maintained by preserving the faith of Buddhism. It is, therefore, essential to preserve all Buddhist institutions in Tibet, such as the Jokhang temple and Ramoche in Lhasa, Samye, and Traduk in southern Tibet, and the three great monasteries, etc.
- (2) The various Buddhist sects in Tibet should be kept in a distinct and pure form. Buddhism should be taught, learned, and meditated upon properly. Except for special persons, the administrators of monasteries are forbidden to trade, loan money, deal in any kind of livestock, and/or subjugate another's subjects.
- (3) The Tibetan government's civil and military officials, when collecting taxes or dealing with their subject citizens, should carry out their duties with fair and honest judgment so as to benefit the government without hurting the interests of the subject citizens. Some of the central government officials posted at Ngari Korsum in western Tibet, and Do Kham in eastern Tibet, are coercing their subject citizens to purchase commercial goods at high prices and have imposed transportation rights exceeding the limit permitted by the government. Houses, properties, and lands belonging to subject citizens have been confiscated on the pretext of minor breaches of the law. Furthermore, the amputation of citizens' limbs has been carried out as a form of punishment. Henceforth, such severe punishments are forbidden.
- (4) Tibet is a country with rich natural resources; but it is not scientifically advanced like other lands. We are a small, religious, and independent nation. To keep up with the rest of the world, we must defend our country. In view of past invasions by foreigners, our people may have to face certain difficulties, which they must disregard. To safeguard and maintain the independence of our country, one and all should voluntarily work hard. Our subject citizens residing near the borders should be alert and keep the government informed by special messenger of any suspicious developments. Our subjects must not create major clashes between two nations because of minor incidents.
- (5) Tibet, although thinly populated, is an extensive country. Some local officials and landholders are jealously obstructing other people from developing vacant lands, even though they are not doing so themselves. People with such intentions are enemies of the State and our progress. From now on, no one is allowed to obstruct anyone else from cultivating whatever vacant lands are available. Land taxes will not be collected until three years have passed; after that the land cultivator will have to pay taxes to the government and to the landlord every year, proportionate to the rent. The land will belong to the cultivator.

Your duties to the government and to the people will have been achieved when you have executed all that I have said here. This letter must be posted and proclaimed in every district of Tibet, and a copy kept in the records of the offices in every district.

From the Potala Palace. (Seal of the Dalai Lama).

THE MONGOLIA-TIBET TREATY OF JANUARY 1913

Treaty signed between Mongolia and Tibet at Urga on 11 January 1913.

Mongolia and Thibet, having freed themselves from the dynasty of the Manchus and separated themselves from China, have formed their own independent States, and, having in view that both States from time immemorial have professed one and the same religion, with a view to strengthening their historic and mutual friendship the Minister for Foreign Affairs, Nikta Biliktu Da-Lama Rabdan, and the Assistant Minister, General and Manlai baatyr beiseh Damdinsurun, as plenipotentiaries of the Government of the ruler of the Mongol people, and Gudjir tsanshib kanchen-Lubsan-Agvan, donir Agvan Choinzin, Director of the Bank Ishichjamtso, and the clerk Gendun Galsan, as plenipotentiaries of the Dalai Lama, have made the following agreement.

Article 1. The ruler of Thibet, Dalai Lama, approves and recognises the formation of an independent Mongol State, and the proclamation, in the year of the pig and the ninth day of the eleventh month, of Chjebzun Damba Lama of the yellow faith as ruler of the country.

Article 2. The ruler of the Mongol people, Chjebzun Damba Lama, approves and recognises the formation of an independent (Thibetan) State and the proclamation of the Dalai Lama as ruler of Thibet.

Article 3. Both States will work by joint consideration for the well-being of the Buddhist faith.

Article 4. Both States, Mongolia and Thibet, from now and for all time will afford each other assistance against external dangers.

Article 5. Each State within its own territory will afford assistance to the subjects of the other travelling officially or privately on affairs of religion or State.

Article 6. Both States, Mongolia and Thibet, as formerly carry on a reciprocal trade in the products of their respective countries in wares, cattle, etc., and will also open industrial establishments.

Article 7. From now the granting of credit to any one will be permitted only with the knowledge and sanction of official institutions. Without such sanction Government institutions will not consider claims.

As regards contracts made previous to the conclusion of the present treaty, where serious loss is being incurred through the inability of the two parties to come to terms, such debts may be recovered by (Government) institutions, but in no case shall the debt concern “shabinars” or “khoshuns.”*

Article 8. Should it prove necessary to supplement the articles of the present treaty, Mongolian and Thibetan Governments must appoint special delegates, who will conclude such agreements as the conditions of the time shall demand.

Article 9. The present treaty shall come into force from the day of its signature.

Plenipotentiaries from the Mongolian Government for the conclusion of the treaty: Nikta Biliktu Da-Lama Rabdan, Minister for Foreign Affairs; and General and Manlai baatyr beiseh Damdinsurun, Assistant Minister.

Plenipotentiaries from the Dalai Lama, the ruler of Thibet, for the conclusion of the treaty: Gudjir tsanshib kanchen Lubsan-Agvan Choizin, the Director of the Bank of Thibet Ishichjamtsa, and the clerk Gedun Galsan.

Signed (by Mongol reckoning) in the fourth day of the twelfth month of the second year of the “Raised by the Many”, and by the Thibetan reckoning on the same day and month of the year of the “water-mouse”.

Notes [by the Editor]

* “*Shabinars* – people who depend from the Court of Hu-tuk-tu and pay taxes to the Court Department.

(*K*) *Hoshun* – principality.”: C. A. Bell, *Tibet Past and Present* (Oxford, 1924), p. 305.

Several translations of this treaty are extant. The version above is that reproduced in *Political Treaties of Tibet 821 to 1951*, n.d (circa 1990), published by the Tibetan Youth Congress, Dharamsala(?), which relies on FO 535/16, No. 88, Enclosure 1, 1913.

Bell, *op. cit.*, pp. 304–5, provides a version of the treaty (‘Alleged Mongol–Tibetan Treaty, 1913’) relying on Perry-Ayscough and Otter-Barry’s *With the Russians in Mongolia* (John Lane), pp. 10–13; also see Bell *op. cit.*, pp. 150–1, where he casts doubt on the validity of the treaty. For further analysis of the treaty, see J. Snelling, *Buddhism in Russia: The Story of Agvan Dorzhiev, Lhasa’s Emissary to the Tsar* (Shaftesbury: Element Books, 1993), pp. 148–52; A. C. McKay, *Tibet and the British Raj: The Frontier Cadre 1904–1947* (Richmond: Curzon Press, 1997), p. 55, where I note that the British were supplied with their first official copy of the treaty by the Russian Government; see OIOC L/P&S/11/46-723, various correspondence; this file also contains the text of the treaty.

THE MONGOL–TIBETAN TREATY OF JANUARY 11, 1913

Parshotam Mehra

Source: *The Journal of Asian History* 3(1) (1969): pp. 1–22.

Ever since its conclusion, early in January, 1913, the Mongol–Tibetan Treaty has been the subject of much debate. Some knowledgeable students of international affairs have denied its existence – hence the epithet “alleged” that precedes its very mention. Others have questioned the legal validity of the instrument – whether it should ever have come to be signed and sealed. Again, doubts have been cast on the competence of the plenipotentiaries who signed it, and of whom the well-known and colourful, albeit intriguing Buryat Mongol, Aguan Dorjieff was one. A certain mystery seems to enshroud not only the facts of the treaty, but also some of those who were associated with it.

All this notwithstanding, the political import of this unique covenant could scarcely be gainsaid. For in the formative, if confused period following the declaration of Mongolia’s first independence, as later that of Tibet, the Mongol–Tibetan treaty had a powerful impact. It again played a significant role in Mongolia’s diplomacy during the years 1912–14, and weighed heavily in the counsels of the British at the tripartite Simla Conference (1913–14) and for many years afterwards. Archival records recently made available shed a fresh gleam of light on this important phase in the history of Central Asia. By piecing together small bits of evidence in the pages that follow, an attempt has been made to assess its true import in the light of the times to which it belongs.

II

As an essential preliminary it may be necessary, however briefly, to reconstruct the background of events. It will be recalled that on December 1, 1911, the Mongols had declared their independence in a language that was at once clear and unequivocal,

... Our Mongolia in its original founding was an individual state . . . Mongolia proclaims itself an independent state under a new Government endowed with authority to manage its affairs, independently of others . . . Mongols shall obey neither Manchu nor Chinese officials, whose administrative authority is completely abolished.¹

The Mongol declaration followed what Professor Lattimore has called many “preliminary debates” before this “final” plunge into the unknown. Thus while the Mongol princes had declared their independence and forsaken allegiance to China on October 30, 1911, followed by the formal declaration of December 1, it was only on December 28, 1911, that at a well-attended assembly, at Urga, the Hutukhtu was crowned “Khan of all Khalkha” and “the ruler of Mongolia and the Great Khan of the Empire”. It is clear, however, that Mongolia’s independence was not born out of “the slightest collusion, common action or even consultation” between its Mongol architects and the authors of the October revolution in China which preceded it.² That would have been a surprise; what was not was the fact that the Tsarist regime in Russia had fully backed and buttressed the intrigues and seditious moves of the Mongol princes vis-à-vis China. To be precise, on the eve of Mongolia’s independence, Russia’s political and diplomatic manoeuvres served to a large extent as a convenient smokescreen behind which secret military arrangements were concluded, encouraging and helping the Mongols in their decision to effect a break-away from the mainland.³ Thus it will be recalled that early in December, 1911 – before the Hutukhtu was crowned – the Irkutsk headquarters of the Russians had delivered to him and to the Mongol Princes a sizeable quantity of firearms – 15,000 rifles, 7.5 million cartridges and 15,000 sabres.⁴

As if to leave no doubt of how deeply they were committed, the Russian signed a four-clause agreement with Mongolia in November, 1912.⁵ In what may be regarded as its preamble, it was stated that owing to “the desire unmistakably expressed by the Mongolians to maintain the national and historic constitution of their country” plus the fact that the “old relations between Mongolia and China” had drawn to a close, a new arrangement had become necessary. Two additional factors were highlighted: firstly that “mutual friendship had always existed between the Mongolians and the Russians” and secondly, that need was now felt to define more clearly the terms regarding trade between their two countries. Spelt out in detail, the Agreement underlined Russia’s solemn pledge to assist in maintaining the autonomous regime which it had helped to establish, and stressed Mongolia’s right to have its own national army and to admit neither the presence of Chinese troops on its territory nor the colonisation of the land by the preponderant Han.

A seventeen-clause protocol annexed to the agreement⁶ set out at length not only “the rights and privileges of Russian subjects in Mongolia” – some of which they already enjoyed – but also the reciprocal rights which the Mongols were to enjoy in Russia. An important clause (Article 111) of the main agreement specified that should the Mongolian government find it necessary to conclude a separate treaty with China, or with any other foreign power, the new treaty “shall in no case either infringe” the clauses of the present agreement “and of the protocol annexed thereto”, nor yet modify them “without the consent of the Imperial Russian Government”. Clearly St. Petersburg was guarding against the possibility of its interests being adversely affected if the Urga regime either chose to go back or was driven into the Chinese fold.

The impact of the October revolution in China was by no means confined to developments in Mongolia. Tibet was affected too, and in a vital manner. The revolt of the Chinese rabble army in Lhasa that followed the October revolution in China and the determined struggle which the Tibetans waged against continued Chinese presence in their land, made the 13th Dalai Lama end his second long exile, this time in India.⁷

His now triumphant entry into his own country was significant.⁸ Existing Chinese forces were to be completely withdrawn, and understandably the British agreed to lend a hand in repatriating them across India.⁹ The Dalai Lama did not feel himself secure in Tibet until the last vestiges of Chinese rule had been eliminated. His progress back home was leisurely, and he refrained from entering, Lhasa until the bulk of Chinese forces, barring a few stragglers, had been cleared and disposed of.¹⁰

Early in July 1912, shortly after entering Tibet, at Phari, at the head of the Chumbi valley, the Tibetan ruler had been greeted by Dorjjeff who reportedly was the bearer of many letters from the Mongol chiefs. In his reply to these, the Lama is said to have underlined "the friendly relations between Tibet and Mongolia which existed like that of the teacher and his disciple." He was keen too that these "should continue and that they (Tibet and Mongolia) should help each other for the benefit of the Buddhist religion."¹¹ Later these words were construed to imply a set of instructions to the Buryat for concluding a more formal, and binding, alliance with the Hutukhtu. Earlier, in 1904, while fleeing from Lhasa, hot on the heels of the Younghusband expedition, the Lama had given Dorjjeff a broader authorisation asking him "to work for the benefit of the Buddhist religion."¹²

A point that bears considerable emphasis here relates to the fact that the Dalai Lama had not yet entered the capital of his country, nor had he formally repudiated his ties with Peking. And yet he must certainly have known of these developments in Urga and, one would suspect, from Dorjjeff himself. As for Tibet, it was not until November, 1912 that the Tsongdu or the National Assembly wrote to the Indian Governor-General that the country had broken off relations with Peking and would like all Chinese troops to be withdrawn from the land. As the Tibetan ruler did not enter Lhasa until early in January, 1913,¹³ the declaration of his independence from the Republican regime in China could only have followed, not preceded, his entry. Clearly, the Tsongdu's communication to the Indian ruler lacked some of the essential desiderate of a formal proclamation of independence and would be hard to accept as such.¹⁴

Yet before he set foot into the Potala, the Dalai Lama must have received news of the Russo-Mongolian agreement (November, 3, 1912) whereby, as has been noticed, the Russians pledged themselves "to maintain the autonomous regime" which the Mongols had established. Besides, Mongolia was to have its own "national army and to admit neither the presence of Chinese troops on her territory nor the colonisation of her land by the Chinese."¹⁵

It is thus clear that by the end of 1912, a certain parallel between the situations in Mongolia and Tibet had emerged. As the "Novoe Vremja" put it:

political autonomy for Tibet is as necessary to Great Britain as that (of) Mongolia is to Russia . . . it would be absurd to blame Great Britain for taking this line and Russia would do well to imitate it in regard to the autonomy of Mongolia.¹⁶

III

Thus it was against the background of the October Revolution in China and the resultant chaotic political situation in the country, that the Mongol-Tibetan treaty came to be concluded. As has been pointed out, both the former "dependencies" of

the Manchu empire had declared their independence on the eve of its conclusion. What was of even greater significance, Russia in the case of Mongolia more formally, as Britain in the case of Tibet quite tacitly, had agreed to under-write the newly-proclaimed status of the two countries. Not that the Chinese were oblivious of stepping into the breach. The Manchus themselves, before abdicating, were quite aware of the strains to which the Empire had been exposed,

Yuan Shih-kai, having been elected sometime ago President of the National Assembly at Peking, is therefore, able at this time of change to unite the North and the South, let him then, with full powers so to do, organise a provisional Republican Government, conferring thereon with the representatives of the Army, of the people, that peace may be assured to the people whilst the complete integrity of the territories of the five races, Chinese, Manchus, Mongols, Muhammadans, and Tibetans, is at the same time maintained, making together a great state under the title of the Republic of China (Chung Hua Ming Kuo).¹⁷

No sooner did he take office, the new President implored the Hutukhtu to retrace his steps. The correspondence that ensued throws an interesting sidelight on the characters of the two men and on the stakes for which they were fighting. Driven to his wits' end, the Bogdo Khan showed his hand:

The declaration of independence and autonomy was effected before the abdication of the Manchu Emperor. Such proclamation has been made to the world, and I am not at liberty to make any alteration. If you insist on doing so, please consult with the neighbouring country to prevent any objections that might arise.¹⁸

Undeterred by this rebuff and Russia's clear involvement as "the neighbouring country", the President issued "Orders" which are a clear indication of his determination, by executive fiat, to stop the deterioration of the relations before it was too late. Thus he pledged, in a most "solemn and unchangeable oath", to put an end to "all the apprehensions and irregular measures" of the preceding regime and to treat the dependencies "on a footing of equality with China proper." At the same time he entreated the two of them – who "used to be a buttress on our North-East Frontier" – to follow "the wishes of the people as a whole."¹⁹ As though not entirely unaware of the rumblings of the distant storm, President Yuan declared,

Now that the five races are joined in a democratic union . . . the term "Dependencies", as used under the monarchy, must therefore cease to be used . . . For the future all administrative matters in connection with these territories (Tibet, Mongolia and Turkestan) will come within the sphere of internal administration . . . Until the local politics have all been brought into harmony, all matters in Mongolia, Tibet and Turkestan should be dealt with in accordance with existing procedures.²⁰

It should be obvious that the reference to "local politics" implied the independence movements in these countries and more so, that Yuan Shih-kai was prepared to stay

his hand until matters had settled down, giving him time to acquire a firmer grip over the somewhat uncertain pulse of the Republic.

IV

The Mongol-Tibetan treaty was signed in Urga on January 11, 1913.²¹ Aguan Dorjieff was the principal Tibetan plenipotentiary²² while "the government of the Mongolian people" was represented by Lama Rabdan, the acting Foreign Minister. The first two articles of the nine-clause treaty were no more than a mutual acknowledgement by the two states of their independent status and of the sovereign position of their two heads - "the master of the Yellow Faith Je-Tsun Dampa Lama" and of course the "Sovereign of Tibet", the Dalai Lama. The third article, whereby both countries pledged themselves to "take measures", after mutual consideration, for "the prosperity of the Buddhist faith", was fairly broadly worded. Furthermore, according to Article IV, they undertook to "afford each other aid against dangers," which their nascent states might face, both from within and without. Freedom of travel was guaranteed as was "mutual trade" (Articles V and VI). Transactions of credit were to be allowed "only within the knowledge and permission of official institutions."

Two interesting provisions related to a further supplementing of the articles of the treaty, for which purpose the two governments were to appoint special plenipotentiaries "who shall come to an agreement according to the circumstances then existing" (Article VIII). Nor was it deemed necessary to provide for any special procedure for the ratification of the treaty, which was to come into force "on the date of the signature itself" (Article IX).

Even a cursory glance at its terms will bring out the fact that the treaty was an affirmation by the two states of their newly-won independence from a common yoke, with a clear pledge to support each other against such dangers as they may encounter. It is equally obvious that Dorjieff did not need to have been armed with any special authority - an argument later employed by the Russian Foreign Minister - in order to be able to conclude such a compact on behalf of his master. To be sure, in retrospect, it was the simple, unsophisticated nature of this instrument which completely upset the British. The importance they attached to it is evident from the fact that they were most anxious to ascertain, at the earliest opportunity, whether the treaty did in fact exist. There could be little doubt, and the text bore it out fully, that the Russians had "inspired" the agreement, "dictated" its terms, and inserted such provisions as would make it a practical instrument of policy. It is also interesting to recall that barely a week later, the Russians reportedly concluded with the Mongols, in St. Petersburg, a Convention²³ which clearly brought out the fact that they were not ignorant of Urga's earlier deal with Lhasa.

British enquiries as to whether the treaty actually existed did not lead to very definitive or conclusive answers. When specifically asked to confirm its existence, the Tibetan Prime Minister, Lonchen Shatra, took the somewhat equivocal position that the "condition of mutual help between the teacher and his disciple (viz., Tibet and Outer Mongolia) . . . has been existing for a long time."²⁴ Bell himself confirmed that Tibetan opinion had long held the two countries to be "in a state of practical alliance" although the circumstances at any given time "would dictate the amount and kind of assistance to be rendered in conformity with such alliance."²⁵

Whether or not the treaty really existed, the British were up against a dilemma. The fact of the matter was that the two countries were very closely aligned and insofar as Mongolia was squarely within the Russian fold, Tibet would be exposed. As Lord Hardinge pointed out in his letter to the Secretary of State, Article III of the Russo-Mongolian Agreement of November 3, 1912, had anticipated the conclusion of such a treaty:

It seems not unlikely that the Tibeto-Mongolian Agreement was due to Russian inspiration judging by the wording of Article III . . . and the chain of consecutive thought running through the series of Mongolian agreements.²⁶

There was another difficulty. Even if the Dalai Lama were now to be persuaded to repudiate the covenant, it may not be very easy – “in the absence of any provision for ratification.” The Lama would

in any case find it difficult to refuse the privilege which it provides to Mongolia.

No wonder Lord Hardinge decided that, under the circumstances,

it would appear safer to count upon the existence of the agreement and bring it into the open.²⁷

An important conclusion was thus drawn and although the British did nothing in bringing the agreement “into the open”, they took it into account in all that they did at the Simla Conference. McMahon noted that since 1912

the collapse of the Chinese power in Tibet, and the activities of Russia in Mongolia, had caused . . . a complete change in the status quo in Tibet, which was clearly prejudicial to the interests of Great Britain, in spite of the fact that our geographical position and our extended frontier line forced upon us a closer relation with Tibet than could be claimed by any foreign Power.²⁸

This would go far to explain why the British plenipotentiary at the Simla Conference proposed in his draft agreement of November, 1913 that:

The Three Governments recognise the special status of Tibet and the special mutual interest of Great Britain and China in the maintenance of peace and tranquillity in that country, agree that Tibet shall be regarded as apart from all party and provincial politics in China, and that the nomination and removal of the Chinese Resident in Lhasa shall lie with the President of the Republic of China, in consultation with his Britannic Majesty’s Minister at Peking.

The aim, it was obvious, was to keep Tibet out of the internal affairs of Szechuan and Yunnan. Again, the Resident in Lhasa was to be *persona grata* to the British in India, thereby diminishing the chances of intrigue, hostile to British interests, in the Tibetan capital.

To prevent a possible Russian exploitation of Tibet under the garb of the Mongol-Tibetan agreement, McMahon took additional care to introduce in his draft treaty the following:

The Governments of Great Britain and China recognise the right of the Government of Tibet to grant (and the Governments of Great Britain and China and their respective subjects hereby enjoy the right to undertake) concessions for railways, roads, telegraphs, mining and other industrial enterprises in Tibet, but the Government of Tibet agrees that no such concessions shall be granted to any Power except with the consent of the Governments which are parties to this Treaty.²⁹

The above two provisions in the earlier November, 1913, draft of the British plenipotentiary underwent considerable modifications in the subsequent discussions with Whitehall, and were later dropped in the form spelt out above. What took their place, however, was significant. Taking his cue from the Russo-Chinese declaration on Outer Mongolia of November 5, 1913, McMahon decided to have the widest possible area of a divided Tibet outside of Peking's control. At Simla there had been a long and interminable wrangle between Lonchen Shatra and Ivan Chen as to where exactly the boundary lay between their respective countries. What finally emerged was that Inner Tibet as viewed from the Chinese mainland, was to be placed under a modicum of Chinese sovereignty while Outer Tibet would be the autonomous domain of the Dalai Lama under a vague, ill-defined Chinese suzerainty.³⁰ This arrangement would serve to transform completely the character of the discussions at Simla, and later at Delhi, from what constituted Tibet to what areas should fall into which zone.

The creation of Inner Tibet was important in its own right. Essentially it was designed to bring into being a Chinese buffer zone between autonomous Tibet and (Outer) Mongolia that would make more difficult the conduct of Tibeto-Mongol relations as defined by the new compact between the two countries. This was not to gainsay the fact that as a protégé of St. Petersburg, Urga would allow its masters to exploit the new situation. Thus irrespective of whether or not a treaty between Tibet and Mongolia was extant, McMahon's proposed new zone of Inner Tibet would serve to dam Russian penetration into Tibet facilitated by its political and economic stranglehold over Urga.

It is not necessary here to go into the details of what happened at Simla nor how thin the line was that finally divided the Chinese and Tibetan plenipotentiaries in terms of areas that would fall into their respective spheres of Inner and Outer Tibet. Two facts alone bear mention in our limited context. One, that after an admittedly unfavourable initial reaction, both parties accepted the concept of the two zones which, contrary to general opinion, conformed to some sort of an historical dividing line.³¹ Two, in an attempt to lay down a definitive boundary, McMahon wrecked the chances of the success of the Conference. One vainly asks if the Russian parallel in the case of Mongolia – of leaving the physical boundaries indeterminate for the time being – would not have been a better solution if only insofar as it would have averted an immediate breakdown.³² For the sake of his little gain, that of making things precise and definitive, McMahon played at high stakes and lost. This was doubly unfortunate for India and Tibet. To McMahon personally, it was a tragedy of no mean dimensions.

V

A major outcome of the Mongol-Tibetan treaty, namely the impingement of an Inner Tibetan buffer between the two Buddhist states, has been alluded to. The consequences were disastrous for the Simla treaty because of its failure to reconcile the boundary differences between the two Tibets which remained unratified, embryonic, inchoate – hanging, as it were, in the air. This fact of an unsettled, continuously disturbed frontier in the east proved to be a significant, if unsettling factor in Tibetan politics during the decades that followed. Another result was the Sino-Russian treaty of November, 1913 – a direct consequence of Mongolia's declaration of independence and all that came in its wake. Russia's chief interest here, as will be noticed presently, was "to erect an effective barrier of which the Gobi desert will be the frontier" against the possibility of future Chinese aggression. Clearly, therefore, St. Petersburg was opposed to Outer Mongolia's penetration into Inner Mongolia and the outlying districts of Chihli province. After a conversation with M. Korostovetz, who had negotiated and signed the Russo-Mongolian convention of November 1912, the British Ambassador in St. Petersburg reported him as saying that it was

nonsense for the Mongols to pretend that the Notes exchanged and the declaration signed at Peking had given them [Mongols] a free hand in the matter of railways and telegraphs and had accorded them the right to enter into direct relations with other sovereign states. Their claim to complete independence was also unfounded as well as the right which they asserted to annex portions of Inner Mongolia.

The Russian Minister had taken care to underline the fact that while it was true that the word "Mongolia", and not "Outer Mongolia" has been inserted into the Russo-Mongolian Convention of November 1912, he had in a written document, "reserved to Russia the right of substantially defining the limits of the territory" referred to.³³

What the Russians had reluctantly conceded, it would seem under considerable Mongol pressure, they had now more than given away by their deal with China. In the latter case, Russia had clearly recognised that "the territory of *Outer* Mongolia forms a part of the territory of China". In addition to that, as for "questions of a political and territorial nature", the Chinese were to come to an agreement with the Russian government "through negotiations in which the authorities of Outer Mongolia shall take part." As if this was not explicit enough, it was laid down that,

the exact boundaries of Outer Mongolia, as well as the boundary between the district of Kobdo and the district of Altai, shall be the subject of the subsequent conferences provided for in Article V of the Declaration.³⁴

Another aspect of the question needs careful analysis. At Simla the British were keen to obtain a relaxation of the self-denying clauses of the 1907 declaration vis-à-vis Tibet, which were an integral part of the Anglo-Russian entente of that year.³⁵ Anxious that they should have a free hand, "should such a step prove desirable", the Foreign Office asked the British Ambassador in St. Petersburg to sound out the

Russians. M. Sazonov, the Tsar's Foreign Minister, however, was a tough bargainer. He refused to regard Mongolia "as in *pari materia*" with Tibet and quite plainly wanted a quid pro quo – so as "to be able to face opinion in Russia more easily".³⁶ On a visit to London, in the autumn of 1912, he had told Lord Crewe, the then Secretary of State for India, that it would help matters if the British were to "give material assistance in smoothing things with Afghanistan."³⁷ Barring a clear contradiction in what he is reported to have told the Japanese Ambassador in St. Petersburg,³⁸ M. Sazonov's attitude towards any major revision of the 1907 Convention vis-à-vis Tibet remained consistent throughout: Russia would not be a party to any such relaxation of its provisions unless the British were prepared to pay an adequate price and make material concessions in some other sphere.

The principal British argument was that "the changes which have been effected in the political and commercial situation in Central Asia", more particularly the alteration in the status of Mongolia which had resulted from the recent action of the Russian Government, "has had an indirect but important effect on the position of Tibet."³⁹ M. Sazonov's reply to this was simple and may best be spelt out in his own words. Indeed Sir George Buchanan in his report to the British Foreign Office summed-up the two lines of reasoning – the British and the Russian – succinctly:

He [Sazonov] virtually admitted our right to ask for the open door but contended that Russia had acted well within her rights in helping Mongolians and had done nothing to change the situation as regards Tibet. [Buchanan] that our respective positions in Asia were materially altered by the veiled protectorate which Russia was assuming over Mongolia and as above changes might react on Tibet it was natural we should wish to safeguard our interests there . . . [Sazonov] but . . . were he gratuitously to renounce all rights secured to her [Russia] under Convention (1907) Russian public opinion would accuse him of sacrificing Russia's interests. Mongolia, he trusted would not be quoted as a reason for asking concessions in Tibet as the two questions were entirely separate and ought not to be mentioned in the same breath . . .⁴⁰

Buchanan felt he had been driven into a corner and realised that it would not be easy to persuade M. Sazonov, much less bring him around,

but I propose to continue to argue that we are entitled to expect consideration in Tibet for our recognition of Russia's privileged position in Mongolia.⁴¹

Grey, the British Foreign Secretary, was more explicit as to what was desired and, in a letter to Buchanan, underlined what was at stake:

HMG do not propose to ask for advantages in Tibet as compensation for those which Russia has obtained in Mongolia, but that they consider that Russia, by her action in Mongolia, has indirectly but materially altered the situation in Tibet, and the relations between Tibet and her neighbours, and that any modification which HMG may propose in the international agreements which at present regulate this question will be, to a certain extent, the consequence of these alterations.⁴²

Despite this hair-splitting, M. Sazonov still proved to be a stumbling block. He told Buchanan that there was “no connection between the two questions” save for the fact “that both Mongolia and Tibet had to be safeguarded against Chinese encroachments.” In the final analysis, while the Russian was willing “to meet our wishes with regard to Tibet, he would have to ask for something in return elsewhere.” However modest our demands, Buchanan concluded, “we must be prepared to be met with some counter-demands on M. Sazonov’s part.”⁴³

The long and short of it was that in return for Russia agreeing to the cancellation of Article IV of the Convention of 1907 – whereby the two Governments had pledged not to seek concessions in Tibet – and permitting the British Trade Agent in Gyantse to visit Lhasa, the Foreign Office had to agree to important concessions in regard to Afghanistan. The final deal, however, failed to materialise: the Russians had taken serious exception to some of its principal clauses while the Chinese could not persuade themselves to sign it. Be that as it may, the British had been too preoccupied with Mongolia and its treaty with Tibet,

M. Sazonov interposed by protesting against any use of the term “protectorate” and by remarking that Russia might as well ask for compensation in the event of our extending our sphere of influence in South Africa . . . (Buchanan) . . . the Tibetans and Mongolians were connected by spiritual ties and though the treaty signed by M. Dorjieff might be of no political importance for the moment, it was symptomatic of a tendency towards closer relations in the future. The changed status of Mongolia might react on Tibet.⁴⁴

Whatever the British fears, the Russians declared that as far as they were concerned they regarded the Mongol–Tibetan deal as infructuous. Earlier, and in a different context, Sazonov had told Buchanan that he viewed it as “*nul et non avenu*” and that, as a Russian subject, Dorjieff could not possibly act in a diplomatic capacity on behalf of the Dalai Lama.⁴⁵ This did not sound very convincing to the British Foreign Office who took his repeated assertions of Dorjieff’s innocence with a goodly pinch of salt. To be sure Sir Arthur Nicolson, the negotiator of the 1907 Agreement with Izovlski, and the person mainly responsible for keeping Mongolia out of the 1906–7 agenda at St. Petersburg, had felt disillusioned. Indeed he was “anxious about Russo-Tibetan relations via Mongolia . . . and a large increase, even if indirect, of Russian influence in Tibet.”⁴⁶ It was obvious to him that the status quo in Tibet, as no doubt Russian and British relations towards Lhasa, had been “distinctly” altered. Again, was it not unwise “to let Russia”, under cover of the Urga Hutukhtu, “have direct relations with Lhasa and the Dalai Lama”? The British realised what was at stake. And the way out, short of paying Sazonov the price he now demanded, was to split Tibet, as has been noticed, into two zones, interposing a Chinese buffer between Mongolia and the Dalai Lama’s domain.

VI

In the years that followed the abortive Simla Conference and the kaleidoscopic developments in Mongolia as indeed in Russia itself, the problem of Tibeto-Mongol relations took on an entirely different complexion. Keen observers of the scene debated how

the Russians had succeeded in the one case while the British had failed in the other. Eric (later Sir Eric) Teichman writing in 1920, after a visit to Mongolia commented:

Russia was more successful in dealing with the Mongolian question (in the years 1911-15) because she did not hesitate to take independent action with the Mongols when the Chinese procrastinated, because she did not trouble unduly about the exact frontier lines of the new Mongolian state (described as territory formerly under the jurisdiction of the Chinese Amban) and because due regard was paid to Chinese "face".⁴⁷

The remarkable parallel between Tibet and Outer Mongolia, vis-à-vis the mainland, has always impressed the Chinese as it has no doubt the world outside. Thus both countries viz., Central Tibet (more specifically the provinces of U and Tsang) as well as Outer Mongolia turn their backs on China from which they are separated by long desert trails. Instead they look toward Siberia and India, of which they are, properly speaking, the respective hinterlands. In 1919, when on British initiative, considerable headway had been made with regard to settling the boundary between Tibet and China in the Eastern Marches, the Chinese abruptly called off the negotiations. Although some lame excuses were trotted out, the underlying reason was not hard to find. The militarists, the so-called Anfu party, who under strong Japanese influence then constituted the Government of China had felt elated by an easy military success in Mongolia. Since they regarded Tibet as an identical proposition and found their position considerably strengthened by the successful "cancellation" earlier in the year of Mongolian "autonomy" there was a firm determination not to barter away their chances of bringing off a similar coup when an opportunity offered itself in the corresponding "dependency" of Tibet.

Nor was the world outside deceived by the close similarity of Hsu Shu-cheng's raid into Mongolia in 1919 to that of Chao Erh-feng's into Tibet in 1910. In both cases all sorts of worthless assurances were held forth and specious excuses given by the Chinese to explain the entry of their troops. In Tibet, in 1910, the pretext was the necessity of policing the trade marts; in the case of Mongolia, in 1919, the alleged aggressive designs of the Bolsheviks across the frontier were found to be convenient scapegoats. The results in both cases were identical: the overthrow of the Tibetan and Mongolian governments, the taking over of all branches of the administration by the Chinese and of complete domination by their armed forces. These earlier developments in Tibet had served as a clear enough warning to the Mongols, as no doubt later happenings in Mongolia did to the regime in Lhasa. For the Dalai Lama was now reasonably certain that "whatever assurances" were held forth and "whatever platitudes" enacted by the President of the Republic at Peking for his alleged benefit, once a few thousand Chinese troops sneaked into Lhasa, all vestiges of Tibetan autonomy will be swept away on the pretext that the Tibetans themselves desired to return to the Chinese fold.

Born out of this remarkable similarity of experience, the Mongols, whenever they talked of the Chinese, invariably used the same language as the Tibetans. Teichman recorded in 1920,

Again and again they referred to the unreliability of the present Republican Chinese government and of the worthlessness of the promises and assurances of modern Chinese officials.⁴⁸

It was much the same problem to which the Dalai Lama had repeatedly drawn attention in the years preceding, as well as those following, the Simla Conference – the difficulty of negotiating with the Chinese without the presence of a third party!

Nor did keen students of these developments then anticipate any Bolshevik propaganda, much less aggression, making headway in these countries:

Apart from the Somenoff-Buriat intrigues, there never has been and is not now the least indication of Bolshevik aggression against Mongolia . . . as for propaganda, the idea of Mongolia, with its lamas and princes and superstitious Buddhist population of nomadic herdsmen affording a field for the spread of Jewish Bolshevik agitators from Siberia is almost as absurd as that of the Dalai Lama and the Tibetans being affected by Bolshevik ideas . . . indeed China and India have no better buffer against Russian Bolshevism than the lamaistic populations of Mongolia and Tibet, provided they are trusted and not antagonised.⁴⁹

Never did a prophecy prove so wide of the mark.

VII

The attempt of the Mongolian Government to obtain some recognition of its independence was by no means confined to its treaty with Tibet in January, 1913. Actually, in a desperate bid to play off a weak China against a powerful Japan, the Urga regime made a bold, if ill-conceived effort to muster support. Thus in September, 1913, when Kodama, a representative of the South Manchurian Railway, passed through Urga, the Mongolian Government offered him a railway concession in Inner Mongolia (over which it claimed, but did not exercise authority) in return for Japan's assistance in preventing Chinese troops from entering Mongolia! As it stood then, it was a fairly devious deal in which the Japanese appear to have shown some interest, a fact which so frightened the Russians as to cause them to make frantic enquiries in Tokyo. In reply, the Japanese Foreign Minister Makino, completely denied any knowledge of such a project.

That, however, was not to be the end. For when Sain-Noyan Khan, the Mongolian leader, arrived in St. Petersburg in November, 1913, he was the bearer of a letter to the Japanese Emperor from the Hutukhtu seeking the Emperor's good offices in preventing Chinese troops from entering Mongolia. Illustrative of his complete naivete, the Mongol leader pleaded with the Russian Foreign Minister to transmit the Bogdo Khan's letter through the Tsar's Ambassador in Tokyo! The Japanese Foreign Minister, after consultations, with his government, returned it, maintaining that a communication from the head of a government with which Japan had no diplomatic relations could not be entertained. In addition, he assured the Russian Ambassador that Kodama had no authority to undertake negotiations in Urga. In returning the letter to Sain-Noyan Khan, M. Sazonov took the opportunity to remind him that the Japanese government considered the Hutukhtu's attempt to "involve Japan in his plans of unifying the Mongols and of separating their territory from China" to be "childish". He thought the incident should serve as a good object-lesson to the young Mongolian state.⁵⁰

In much the same manner, the Russians thwarted early Mongol ambitions to establish diplomatic relations in St. Petersburg itself. Thus when on the eve of his departure for Urga, Sain Noyan Khan expressed a desire to leave a substitute who would be "in charge of his seal and in permanent telegraphic communication with the Urga government", Sazonov put him off. Clearly the Russians saw in this an attempt to establish "a permanent diplomatic representation" of the Mongolian regime in their capital.⁵¹ Earlier the British had been extremely wary in dealing with the Mongolian delegation, since Grey had directed Buchanan not to receive them at the Embassy in St. Petersburg for fear it would create complications.⁵² Besides, the Russians were just then in the process of clinching their own direct deal with China (November 5, 1913). As has been noted, Russia had thereby acknowledged that Outer Mongolia was under the suzerainty of China and that the latter had sought its "good offices" to establish its own relations with Urga, whose "autonomy" it had now recognised.

The Mongol-Tibetan treaty belongs to that twilight period when Mongolia was technically "independent" and Tibet, being rid of the Chinese yoke, had not yet shown its willingness to accept a vague "suzerainty" of the mainland. The powerful impact it had on developments in Central Asia over the decade following its conclusion would be hard to underrate. If these pages provoke further discussion and bring to light new facets of an old, if fascinating chapter in the history of Mongolia and Tibet, they would have served their principal objective.

Notes

- 1 Cited in Peter S. H. Tang, *Russian and Soviet Policy in Manchuria and Outer Mongolia, 1911-31*, (Durham, North Carolina, 1959), p. 301. For the Russian text, Soizlev, in *Novyj Vostok*, No. 13 (1926).
- 2 Owen Lattimore, *Nationalism and Revolution in Mongolia*, (Leiden, 1956), pp. 51-52. Professor Lattimore has cited from the *Political Memoirs* (unpublished) of the now-deceased Dilowa Hutukhtu to the effect that as early as 1909 the Jebtsundamba Hutukhtu had issued a decree declaring in effect that the time had come "to make firm our Mongol faith and Church, to protect our territory and homeland and to devise a policy for dwelling in long-lasting peace and happiness"; that in 1910 the Princes presented a document stamped with the seals of all of them saying "it was necessary to have an independent Mongol state."
- 3 *Kratnyj Arkhiv* (Red Archives), 37, entitled *Carskaja Rossija i Mongolija 1913-14*, 15-68, provides the basic source-material for Russian activity in Mongolia during these years. An English translation is to be found in the *Chinese Social and Political Review*, 16 (January, 1933), 4 and 17 (April, 1933), 1.
- 4 Clerard M. Friters, *Outer Mongolia and its International Position*, (London, 1951), p. 61, reveals that it was the administrator of the Russian Consul in Urga who knew all about the insurrection plans, and was active in the distribution of arms, who in a wire to St. Petersburg on November 18 (December 1), 1911, advised the overthrow of the Chinese Government in Urga with the help of Russian arms and a proclamation of Mongolia's independence.
- 5 For the full text of the agreement see John V. A. MacMurray (Compiler and Editor), *Treaties and Agreements with and Concerning China 1894-1919*, 1-11 (Oxford, 1921), 11, pp. 992-93.
Reference may also be made to *China Year Book 1919-20*, (London, 1920), pp. 594-96 and *Far Eastern Review*, (Manila, 1913), ix, p. 318.
- 6 MacMurray, n. 5, 11, pp. 993-96.
- 7 For details of the Chinese Army's revolt in Lhasa, see *Government of India Foreign and Political Department Proceedings*, Secret External (abbreviated et. seq. as Foreign), March, 1914, 1-251.
- 8 The Dalai Lama left Kalimpong for Chumbi on June 24, 1912.

- 9 Initially the Government of India had suggested the deputation of Laden La (later Sardar Bahadur Laden La), a Sikkimese national who was then Superintendent of Police in Darjeeling. As a Liaison Officer attached to the Dalai Lama's suite during the latter's stay in India, 1910-12, he was close to the Tibetan ruler. His mission, later countermanded by His Majesty's Government, was to repair to the Tibetan capital, persuade the Chinese to surrender and ensure that their repatriation was smooth, unmarred by ugly incidents. Later the Nepalese representative at Lhasa, Lt. Lal Bahadur, lent a hand in effecting a settlement between the Tibetans and the rebel Chinese soldiery in and around the Tibetan capital. On the Sikkim-Tibet border the British detailed their Military Attache in Peking, Lt. Colonel Willoughby, to ensure smooth evacuation operations. Apart from *Foreign*, n. 7, reference may also be made to M. E. Willoughby, "The Relation of Tibet to China", *Royal Central Asian Journal*, XI, (1924).
- 10 The Dalai Lama, who reached Phari early in July, arrived in Gyantse by the middle of the month. Later, after passing through Gyantse, he settled down on the banks of Yamdok Tso. Lhasa was not reached until early in January, 1913.
- 11 The citation is from a letter written by Lonchen Shatra, the Tibetan Plenipotentiary at the Simla Conference, in reply to an enquiry by Mr. (later Sir) Charles Bell "to ask you whether" the Mongol-Tibetan treaty had been "authorised" by the Dalai Lama. Bell's letter is dated November 27, the Lonchon's reply, November 28, (1913). *Foreign*, June 1914, Proceedings, 151-57, office note, p. 2.
- 12 *Ibid.*, Lonchen Shatra's letter.
- 13 Robert A. Rupen, *Mongols of the 20th Century*, 1-11, (Bloomington, 1964), 1, n. 34, p. 113, lists the Dalai Lama's movements as between August, 1904 and June 24, 1912, when he "returned to Lhasa". One would suspect that what the author actually implies the latter to be is the date of the Dalai Lama's departure from Kalimpong, on his way to Lhasa.
- 14 "However with the outbreak of the Revolution of 1911 . . . the Dalai Lama returned from India and, as a result, the treaty of peace was signed, by which it was agreed that all Chinese troops except an escort of the Amban . . . should be withdrawn from Tibet." W. W. Willoughby, *Foreign Rights and Interests in China*, (Baltimore, Johns Hopkins, 1920), p. 460. The "treaty of peace" was an agreement of a local character and one wonders if it could be equated with the declaration of independence.
- 15 *Supra*, pp. 2-3. For the text of the agreement n. 5.
- 16 *Novoe Vremja*, September 10, 1912, cited, in *Foreign*, External B, March, 1913, Proceedings, 54-62. The Russian newspaper was referring to the British demand for recognition, by China, of Tibetan autonomy.
- 17 H. F. McNair, *Modern Chinese History: Selected Readings*, (London, 1927), pp. 22-26. The Imperial Edict was dated February 12, 1912 and is a fairly comprehensive document laying down, inter alia, in seven articles, "the terms accorded" to the Manchus, Mongols, Muhammadans and Tibetans as to their future status in the new Republican regime that was proclaimed.
- 18 Cited in Aitchen K. Wu, *China and the Soviet Union*, (London, Methuen, 1950), p. 42. Reference may also be made to Michel M. Pavlovsky, *Chinese-Russian Relations*, (New York, 1949), pp. 89-90.
- 19 For the full text of the Presidential "Order", dated March 25, 1912, see Jordan to Grey, dated March 31, 1912, no. 28, in *Foreign*, October, 1912, Proceedings, 12-45.
- 20 Presidential "Order", dated April 21, 1912, in *Foreign*, Proceedings 36, sub-enclosure 2, Jordan to Grey, April 27, 1912.
- 21 A Tibetan writer, in a recent book, accepts the fact of the treaty being concluded, paraphrases its principal terms and significantly omits to mention Dorjjeff being Tibet's plenipotentiary. He nonetheless maintains that the treaty was signed "about one month" before the Dalai Lama's proclamation of his country's independence. Tsepon W. D. Shakabpa, *Tibet: A Political History*, (New Haven, 1967), pp. 248-49. The 14th Dalai Lama, *My Land and My People*, (London, 1962), is silent on the fact of the treaty although he refers briefly, though significantly, to Tibet's "religious and political ties with Mongolia" (p. 51). For the text see *Foreign*, n. 11. Also Bell, *Tibet, Past and Present*, (Oxford, 1927), Appendix.

- 22 For a note on Aguan Dorjjeff see, P. L. Mehra, "Tibet and Russian Intrigue", *Royal Central Asian Journal*, 45, 1, (January, 1958), pp. 28-42. Reference may also be made to *Rupen*, n. 13, pp. 108-11. Professor Rupen talks of the Buryat as "the peripatetic Aguan Dorjjeff" who travelled "almost continuously from 1897 to 1917 . . . with messages, proposals, plans, arguments, pleas, and complaints, between Lhasa, St. Petersburg, the Kalmyk area, Transbaikal (the Buryats) and Urga." He further maintains that the Anglo-Russian Convention "apparently surprised and disappointed" the Dalai Lama who felt Dorjjeff had misled him. Thus, after 1907, the Buryat "no longer enjoyed the Dalai's complete confidence and trust" and became, simply one of the advisers useful for communicating with Russia.
- 23 Mention is made of the Convention in the office-note by Archibald Rose, of the Chinese (British) Consular Service who was Advisor in Chinese Affairs to Sir Henry McMahon at the Simla Conference, dated November 28, 1913, in *Foreign*, n. 11. It has not, however, been possible to locate the Convention in official records or in the known history of the period.
- 24 *Ibid.*, Lonchen Shatra's reply is dated November 28, 1911.
- 25 *Ibid.*, Office-note by Charles Bell dated November 29, 1911. *Rupen*, (p. 110), contends that at Simla the Tibetan representative claimed that "Dorjjeff had been granted no authority to conclude such a treaty and they disavowed it." Actually, as has been noted in this paper, the Lonchen's reply was equivocal and the British conclusion was that they had to take the treaty into account in all that they did.
- 26 *Foreign*, n. 11, Viceroy to Secretary of State, December 9, 1913, Proceedings 154. Article 3 of the Agreement laid down,
- "If the Mongolian Government finds it necessary to conclude a separate treaty with China or any other foreign power, the new treaty shall in no case infringe the clauses of the present agreement and of the protocol annexed thereto, or modify them without the consent of the Imperial Government."
- 27 *Ibid.*, Proceedings 154, Viceroy to Secretary of State, December 9, 1913.
- 28 McMahon, "Final Memorandum by the British Plenipotentiary, Tibet Conference", *Foreign*, May 1915, Proceedings, 36-50.
- 29 *Loc. cit.*
- 30 "Outer Tibet, under the Lhasa Government, (was) to enjoy autonomy under Chinese suzerainty, while Inner Tibet was to be placed under a measure of effective Chinese rule; in the former the Chinese Government and in the latter the Dalai Lama were to enjoy the shadow without the substance of suzerain authority." Eric Teichman, *Affairs of China*, (London, 1938), p. 225. Teichman bemoaned the fact that the British "negotiators, showing a certain lack of originality in their proposals, sought a settlement along the lines of Russia's dealings with Mongolia."
- 31 Alastair Lamb, *The McMahon Line*, 1-11, (London, 1966), 11, p. 524. Actually, in the age-old relations between Tibet and China the area constituting "the Marches" has been traditionally a no man's land between the Dalai Lama's Tibet and the western provinces of China. The concept of "Ulterior" and "Anterior" Tibet had been there long before in Teichman's words, "a certain lack of originality" - gave them their new nomenclature of Inner and Outer Tibet. Essentially, China's control was sought to be made more effective.
- 32 It will be recalled that Article 5 of the Russo-Mongolian Declaration of November 5, 1913, laid down that "questions pertaining to the interests of Russia and of China on Outer Mongolia" were to form the subject-matter of subsequent conferences. In the Notes exchanged between the two Foreign Ministers, accompanying the Declaration, paras 2 and 4 elaborated that the questions in view were of a "political and territorial nature" (para 2), and that in the absence of "detailed maps of Mongolia" and its "uncertain" boundaries, the matter will be discussed later (para 4).
- 33 Buchanan to Grey, letter, dated December 24, 1913, No. 370 in *Foreign*, July 1914, Proceedings, 341-91.
- 34 For the full text of the Russo-Chinese declaration, and exchange of Notes, see *MacMurray*, n. 5, 11, pp. 1066-67.

- 35 For the text of the Convention, relating to "Arrangement Concerning Tibet", see H. E. Richardson, *Tibet and Its History*, (Oxford, 1962), Appendix XII, pp. 258-59. Article 11 laid down that "in conformity with the admitted principle of the suzerainty of China over Tibet, Great Britain and Russia engage not to enter into negotiations with Tibet except through the intermediary of the Chinese Government." Under Article 111 both Governments undertook "not to send representatives to Lhasa". They further pledged "neither to seek nor to obtain" concessions for "railways, roads, telegraphs and mines or other rights in Tibet" (Article IV) and undertook that no part of the country's revenues "shall be pledged or assigned" to any of them (Article V).
- 36 *Foreign*, External B, March 1913, Proceedings, 54-62. The Foreign Office confided to the India Office that Sazonov had exaggerated public opinion in regard to Tibet. For "it is difficult to believe" that it is "so sensitive" as "to render it difficult for the Russian Government to negotiate a complete revision of the Anglo-Russian Convention of 1907, should such a step prove desirable." *Ibid.*, No. 67.
- 37 *Ibid.*, No. 56. The citation is from Lord Crewe's note of September 29, 1912, on his conversations with M. Sazonov, during the latter's visit to London.
- 38 The Russian Foreign Minister is reported to have told the Ambassador that he [Sazonov] "was not likely to object to anything which he (Grey) wished to do in Tibet, provided that he [Sazonov] had a free hand in Outer Mongolia." Grey told Sir Claude Macdonald (British Ambassador in Tokyo) that he "read to the [Japanese] Ambassador [in London] the record of my conversation with M. Sazonov which was not quite in the same sense." No. 60 in *Ibid.*, Grey to Macdonald, October 10, 1912.
- 39 No. 371 in *Foreign*, n. 33, Grey to Buchanan, January 24, 1914.
- 40 No. 380 in *Ibid.*, Buchanan to Grey, February 1, 1914.
- 41 *Loc. cit.*
- 42 No. 381 in *Ibid.*, Grey to Buchanan, February 12, 1914.
- 43 No. 384 in *Ibid.*, Foreign Office to India Office, March 14, 1914, Encl. Buchanan to Grey, dated March 4, 1914.
- 44 No. 388 in *Ibid.*, Buchanan to Grey, February 3, 1914.
- 45 Office note, by Archibald Rose, November 28, 1913, in *Foreign*, n. 11.
- 46 Cited in *Lamb*, n.31, 11, 451.
- 47 No. 35 in *Foreign*, February 1921, Proceedings, 35-37, letter of His Majesty's Minister, Peking, dated September 28, 1920, enclosing "a most interesting and instructive report by Mr. Teichman" on his visit to Urga in August, 1920.
- 48 *Loc. cit.*
- 49 *Loc. cit.*
- 50 The incident is narrated at length in *Pavlovsky*, n. 13, pp. 60-64. Pavlovsky calls it "a significant incident" which was "cleverly exploited by Russian diplomacy."
- 51 In his report to the throne, Sazonov insisted that the purpose of the Mongol leaders' visit was "to assure Russian assistance in the joining of Inner Mongolia to the possessions of the Hutukhtu of Urga." *Ibid.*, 59. The Mongols were partially placated by a loan of three million rubles, and furnished with a certain amount of arms and ammunition, which they pledged "not to use against China".
- 52 No. 274 in *Foreign*, October, 1913, Proceedings, 44-301. Actually Lord Crewe, then Secretary of State for India, had strongly protested against this directive. He feared that in this way HMG "may lose an opportunity, which is probably unlikely to recur, of obtaining a footing in Mongolia which might prove of value in future dealings with the Russian Government."

LADAKHI AND BHUTANESE ENCLAVES IN TIBET

John Bray

Source: T. Dodin and H. Räther (eds.), *Recent Research on Ladakh 7: Proceedings of the 7th Colloquium of the International Association for Ladakh Studies held in Bonn/Sankt Augustin, 12–15 June 1995*, Ulm: Ulmer Kulturanthropologische Schriften, 1997, pp. 89–104.

Until the 1950s both Ladakh and Bhutan governed small enclaves of territory in Western Tibet. Ladakh's enclave consisted of the village of Minsar (*Men-ser*), near lake Manasarovar (*Ma-pham*), and its surrounding land; while Bhutan governed the Darchen (*Dar-chen*) Labrang and several smaller monasteries and villages near Mount Kailas (*Gangs rin-po-che, Ti-se*). These enclaves were entirely surrounded by the territory of the Dalai Lama, but Ladakh (superseded by the Kashmir Durbar after 1846) and Bhutan continued to raise revenue there for some 300 years.

The status of these enclaves was ambiguous. By the 20th century both Kashmir/India and Bhutan claimed to hold their lands in full sovereignty. By contrast the Lhasa government acknowledged that Ladakh/Kashmir and Bhutan held certain rights, but it nevertheless tried to exercise its own authority as though the enclaves were no more than foreign-owned estates in Tibetan territory. These disputes were never fully resolved but came to an abrupt end in the 1950s when the Chinese government took over both sets of enclaves, without paying compensation either to Ladakh/Kashmir or to Bhutan.

This paper is a preliminary discussion of the ambiguities surrounding the enclaves. It begins with an analysis of their common origins in the seventeenth century, and then discusses the disputes surrounding them in the twentieth century, making particular reference to British records. The paper concludes with a discussion of the enclaves' standing in the wider context of traditional and contemporary Himalayan politics.

Origins

Both two sets of enclaves share a common origin in that they date back to the period when the Kings of Ladakh controlled the whole of Western Tibet (*Mnga'-ris-skorgsum*). The link with Bhutan arises because of the Ladakhi royal family's association with the Drukpa Kagyupa (*'Brug-pa bka'-rgyud-pa*) sect. This association dates back at least to the end of the sixteenth century: in 1577 King Jamyang Namgyal (*'Jams-dbyang rnam-rgyal*) of Ladakh, who stood in a priest/patron relationship

with the Drukpa leader Padma Karpo (*Padma dkar-po* – 1527–1592), sponsored the building of a tantra school on his territory.¹ The Drukpa school also established close links with Zangskar, which was subordinate to Ladakh, in the same period.

In the early seventeenth century, the Drukpa Kagyupa split because of a dispute over the reincarnation of Padma Karpo. The two rival candidates were Pagsam Wangpo (*Dpag-bsam dbang-po* – 1593–1641) who belonged to the *Phyong-rgyas* noble family; and Zhabdrung Ngawang Namgyal (*Zhab-drung Ngag-dbang rnam-rgyal* 1594–1651?) the abbot of Ralung (*Rva-lung*) monastery, which lies to the east of Gyantse. The ruler of Tsang (*sde-rid gtsang-pa*) decided in favour of Pagsam Wangpo, forcing Ngawang Namgyal to flee to the south. The Zhabdrung united the whole of what is now Bhutan under a single authority and is regarded as the founder of the Bhutanese state.² The Zhabdrung established himself as the head of the *Lho-'brug* or southern branch of the Drukpa Kagyupa. The indigenous name for Bhutan is Druk Yul (*'Brug-yul*), a reference to its association with the Drukpa Kagyupa.

The Kings of Ladakh maintained contact with both the northern and the southern branches of the Drukpa Kagyupa.³ Stagtsang Raspa Ngawang Gyatso (*Stag-tshang ras-pa ngag-dbang rgya-mtsho* – 1574–1651), who was associated with the northern branch, became the foremost teacher of King Sengge Namgyal (*Seng-ge rnam-rgyal*) and founded the monasteries of Hemis (*Gsang-snags chos-gling*), Chemre (*Theg-chog*) and Wanla (*bDe-mchog rnam-rgyal*). However, Stagna (*Stag-sna*) monastery which was founded in *circa* 1580 was affiliated with the southern branch, and the King maintained close personal contact with the Zhabdrung. Sengge Namgyal's brother, Prince Standzin (Ladakhi pronunciation of *Bstan-'dzin*), went to Bhutan and rose to become the governor (*rdzong-dpon*) of Wangdi Phodrang (*Dbang-'dus-pho-brang*). In 1639 Standzin helped defeat a Tibetan army at a battle at Punakha in Bhutan.⁴

Sengge Namgyal's territories in Western Tibet included the area surrounding Mount Kailas which had long associations with the Kagyupa. These date back to the time of Milarepa who engaged in a magical contest with the Bonpo master *Na ro Bon chung* for authority over the sacred mountain. It was finally decided that the one who reached the summit of the mountain first on the fifteenth day of the month would be the victor. Naro Bonchung began ascending the mountain before dawn, but Milarepa overtook him – using his robes as wings – and reached the summit as the first rays of the sun appeared.⁵ The two Kagyu schools with the closest association with Kailas were the Drigung (*'Bri gung pa*) and the Drukpa.⁶

As a mark of respect to the Zhabdrung, the King offered him a series of monasteries near the mountain. The monasteries which Senge Namgyal granted to the Zhabdrung were: *Dar-chen Bla-brang-dgon*, *Gnyen-po'i-ri-rdzong*, *Bri-ra-phug*, *Rdzu-'phrul-phug*, *Ge-rdzong*, *Bya-skyibs*, *Ye-ri-dgon-phug*, *Gad-ser*, *So-mo-rgyu*, *Shi-ha-ra*.⁷ These are the territories which developed into Bhutanese enclaves in Tibet. In 1661 King Deldan Namgyal (*Bde-ldan rnam-rgyal*) confirmed all the existing rights of the southern school in his kingdom. His charter makes specific reference to the monasteries and associated properties on the snow mountain *Ti-se'* (Kailas).⁸

Ladakh's close association with Bhutan was to have fateful consequences. In 1677 King Deleg Namgyal (*Bde-legs-rnam-rgyal*) chose to take Bhutan's side in a war with Tibet. This subsequently led the Lhasa government to invade Ladakh, and fighting continued from 1681–1683.⁹ Ladakh was defeated and the Sixth *Brug-chen Mi-pham dbang-po* helped mediate between the two sides to negotiate the treaty of Temisgang

(*Gting-mo-sgang*) in 1684. Among other provisions in the treaty Ladakh agreed to send a triennial *lo-phyag* mission to Lhasa carrying a specified list of symbolic gifts; and it ceded the whole of Western Tibet to the Lhasa government – with the exception of certain enclaves.

The Ladakhi enclave at Minsar

The Ladakhi enclave was the estate of Minsar which the King retained, ostensibly to meet the religious offering expenses of Lake Manasarowar and Mount Kailas.

Minsar was a small settlement on the main trading route from Ladakh to Lhasa. The first Western reference to it comes from William Moorcroft who passed through in late July 1812.¹⁰ In Moorcroft's description, Minsar had "*but one house made of bricks baked in the sun, and five tents of goat-herds*". However, he considered his stay there to have been profitable because he was able to buy a sample of Tibetan wool and he hoped that this would one day become a major trade item with the British. He recorded that the morning he spent there was hot and, with characteristic commercial astuteness, commented that this was "*a circumstance in our favour as the sellers of wool are in the habit of wetting it under the idea as they pretend of its twisting the closer, but more probably to make it weigh heavier*". Moorcroft considered that day to be "*the epoch at which may be fixed the origin of a traffic which is likely to be extremely beneficial to the Honourable Company*." He makes no reference to Minsar's links with Ladakh.

In 1834 Zorawar Singh invaded Ladakh on behalf of Gulab Singh, the ruler of Jammu. After a series of battles, Ladakh finally lost its independence in 1842. Four years later, Gulab Singh became the first Maharaja of Jammu and Kashmir, including Ladakh. Jammu and Kashmir was a princely state within the Indian empire, and in theory the Government of India was responsible for its external relations. However, in 1852 the Kashmir government signed an agreement with Tibet agreeing to fulfil the obligations of the 1684 treaty, including the triennial *lo-phyag* mission to Lhasa. It appeared that it did so on its own initiative, without reference to the British.¹¹ Similarly, the Kashmir Durbar inherited Ladakh's claim to Minsar and continued to collect revenue from it. In 1853, when Mehta Basti Ram was Wazir (governor) of Ladakh, this revenue amounted to Rs 56.¹²

There is no detailed Western description of Minsar in the second half of the nineteenth century, but British officials in Kashmir and Ladakh were certainly aware of its existence. For example, in 1900 R. L. Kennion, who was Joint Commissioner in Ladakh, wrote a despatch discussing *begarl'u-lag* transport obligations in Ladakh and Tibet, and he mentions that by ancient custom the annual mission sent from Ladakh to Minsar was allowed free transport consisting of six baggage animals and one riding pony on both sides of the frontier.¹³ Kennion subsequently discussed whether Minsar should be included in the Ladakh settlement, but the sole reference to Minsar in the preliminary report of the Ladakh settlement is as follows:

According to the papers prepared in Sambhat 1958, the number of villages in Ladakh Tahsil is 110 in addition to which is the village of Masur, which lies in the midst of Chinese Tibet and has never been visited by State Revenue officials.¹⁴

However, it appears that Kashmir was collecting revenue from Minsar throughout this period – for example in 1905 the revenue amounted to Rs 297¹⁵ – and that Minsar was included in the final settlement report.¹⁶ Minsar was also included in the 1911 and 1921 Indian censuses: in the 1921 census it was recorded as having 44 houses, 87 men and 73 women.

Meanwhile, the Tibetan authorities, while acknowledging Kashmir's rights in Minsar, also made their own claims. In 1929 E. B. Wakefield, an ICS officer, visited Western Tibet, and reported that Minsar paid taxes to Kashmir while at the same time fulfilling certain labour obligations to the Tibetan authorities:

I was surprised to learn that the inhabitants of Minsar and the neighbourhood own allegiance not to the Dalai Lama but to the Maharaja of Kashmir. Formerly, I was told, the 40 families resident in the Minsar district used to supply eight men to the Tibetan army, but now, being subjects of the Maharaja of Kashmir, they are exempt from this duty, though they are still compelled to provide free transport for Tibetan officials travelling through their territory. Every year the Lumberdar of Rupshu, or some petty official, from Ladakh comes to Minsar to collect the tribute due to the Maharaja of Kashmir. The tribute consists of 60 sheep, 20 goats, six yaks and 60 lambskins, whilst a sum of 60 rupees is paid half in rupees half in tankas, on account of the travelling expense of the Ladakhi official who collects the tribute.¹⁷

Ten years later Dr Kanshi Ram, the British Trade Agent, visited Minsar. The local people complained to him that they were forced to buy tea from Tibetan officials at a price above the market rate, a form of taxation known as "Pujjar":

We left Chakra on the 21st and reached Minsar on the 23rd September and had to stay there for two days owing to the transport difficulties. The Minsar Gobas who are the subjects of the Kashmir government represented to me that although they had a letter from the Wazir Ladakh to the effect that they should not take any pujjar, yet Jingshung was still pressing them to take six loads (gams) of tea and two loads of grain as pujjar and requested me that I should represent their case to Jingshung. Upon this I saw Jingshung on the 25th September and represented the pujjar case of Minsar men to him. After a long discussion, he told me that it was a very old practice and he was sorry that he could not exempt them from it and assured me that he would now give only three gams of tea instead of six as I had approached him in this connection. I therefore did not approach him any more as the practice of giving pujjar is a very old custom.¹⁸

The question of double taxation evidently continued to be a problem. In 1940 Tsetan Phuntsog visited Minsar on behalf of the Kashmir government. According to his wife's memoirs he negotiated a satisfactory agreement with the Tibetan authorities, but she does not record the details.¹⁹ However, Abdul Wahid Radhu, a Ladakhi Muslim merchant, passed through Minsar in 1942 as a member of the *lo-phyag* mission to Lhasa and he mentions that the inhabitants complained that they still had to pay taxes both to Kashmir and to Tibet.²⁰

Abdul Wahid Radhu was one of the last representatives of an ancient trading tradition. Soon after his visit, the political and economic situation in the Himalayan region changed irrevocably. In 1947 India and Pakistan became independent, but were quickly locked in dispute over Kashmir. Pakistani forces invaded Ladakh as well as the Kashmir valley, and in 1948 they came close to capturing Leh. The UN-brokered ceasefire in January 1949 froze the line of control between Indian and Pakistani troops, but failed to resolve the dispute. Political conditions on the northern side of the Himalaya changed even more drastically with China's invasion of Tibet in 1950 and the crackdown which followed the Lhasa uprising of 1959.

In the late 1940s and early 1950s the Indian and Kashmiri authorities were pre-occupied with their internal problems and with the threat from Pakistan, and therefore neglected their Tibetan enclave. It appears that Minsar stopped paying taxes to Kashmir during this period: India did not formally abandon its claim, but it missed an opportunity to consolidate it in the early 1950s when relations between India and China were relatively favourable.²¹

However, in the course of talks with China in the early 1960s, India maintained – somewhat belatedly – that “*Minsar was a Ladakhi enclave in Tibet and was held in full sovereignty by India.*”²² The context of these talks was the dispute over the boundary between India and Tibet which led to the Sino-Indian war of 1962–63. India referred to Ladakh's claim to Minsar, and its historical relationship with Tibet, to bolster its argument that its own claims represented the “traditional” boundary.

The Sino-Indian boundary dispute remains unresolved. Since the 1960s the attention of the two governments has focused on the demarcation of the frontier and, more recently, on the prospects for mutual trade. The status of Minsar is no more than a minor footnote to these concerns, but one which has still to be cleared up.

Bhutanese enclaves

After the treaty of Temisgang the Tibetan government confirmed Bhutan's title to its lands in western Tibet.²³ The most important Bhutanese property was Darchen Labrang at the foot of Mount Kailas.

In some respects its history was similar to Minsar's: two governments claimed control over it, and its inhabitants were caught in the middle. However, Darchen had greater religious significance than Minsar because it was – and still is – the traditional starting point for pilgrims wishing to make the circuit of Mount Kailas. Moreover, Darchen was also the site of a trading mart in the summer months from mid-July to early September. Indian traders from Almora district purchased wool in exchange for cloth and other Indian goods.

The Bhutanese official in charge of Darchen was known as the *Gangs-ri rdor-'dzin*. A Bhutanese legal code of 1729²⁴ mentions the post as one of the highest offices of state: he was normally a senior lama who served in Darchen for a fixed term. Many British accounts refer to the *rdor-'dzin* as the “dashok” (*drag-shos*), a title which referred to his ranking in the Bhutanese hierarchy. In addition to his religious duties, he was responsible for regulating prices in the Darchen trade mart and arbitrating in disputes. The numbers of pilgrims varied from year to year, but they were a source of revenue to the lama in charge of the monastery, and he remitted part of his earnings to Bhutan.

Bhutan claimed that Darchen and associated estates were completely independent of Lhasa. This claim led to frictions between the *rdor-'dzin* and the two Garpon (*sgar-dpon*) of Gartok who were the Lhasa government's senior representatives in Western Tibet. As will be seen, there are several references to such frictions in twentieth century Western sources, and they no doubt occurred in earlier times as well.

The first Western traveller to visit Darchen was William Moorcroft, who went there in August 1812. Moorcroft's description reflects the fact that his prime interest was in trade:

There are four houses of unburnt brick or stones, and about twenty-eight tents, amongst which that of the servant of the Latáki agent is apparently the best. Sixteen years ago the old pundit says this was a place of consequence. There we may find many Juarí and Dhermu merchants with grain and three tea merchants, who say they are acquainted with Pekin, which they call the capital of Maháchin: but they themselves reside two months journey beyond Pekin.²⁵

Nearly a century later, under the terms of the 1904 Lhasa convention, Britain secured the right to station a Trade Agent in Western Tibet. Unlike their counterparts in Gyantse and Yatung, all the British Trade Agents in Western Tibet were Indians. They spent every summer in Western Tibet, but did not stay there in the winter. Their reports and official diaries are among the main British sources on Western Tibet during this period, and occasionally refer to Darchen.

British officers from the Indian Civil Service (ICS) also made sporadic visits to Western Tibet. The first to do so was Charles Sherring, the District Commissioner of Almora, who went there in 1905. Sherring reported that Darchen's political status of the region was already a source of controversy:

Here in the very midst of Tibetan territory we found an administration ruled by the Ruler of Bhutan, independent of the Gartok viceroys and of Lhasa itself. Apparently the whole is in the nature of a religious endowment, in which the Bhutan representatives will not now tolerate any interference, and so far have matters gone in the past that the retainers of the Darchan ruler have met those of the Garphans and blows have been exchanged, even fire-arms brought into use. During the last three years the appointed officer, who bears the title of Dashok, has been absent from Darchan without intermission, and his faithful servant has done the work in the ordinary course of events. His work is an important one, as he is the head administrator of Darchan; of two monasteries, Nendiphu and Zutulphu (Jamdulphu of the maps) which are situated on the holy way round Kailas; of the Jaikep (Jenkhav) gompa on Lake Manasarowar; of the very important place Khojarnath; of Rungung and Do on the upper Karnali river; of Gazon near Gartok; and four monasteries Iti, Gonphu, Gesur and Samur in the Daba Jongpen's territory.²⁶

In 1905 minor disputes between Bhutanese and Tibetan officials were of no great concern to the British. However, King Ugyan Wangchuk of Bhutan evidently expected

things to change after the Treaty of Punakha which he signed in 1910.²⁷ Under the terms of this treaty Britain was to administer Bhutan's foreign relations which, in principle, might have been expected to include its dealings with Tibet. In December 1912 the King referred to the Bhutanese possessions around Mount Kailas in a letter to Charles – later Sir Charles – Bell, the Political Officer in Sikkim.²⁸ The Tibetan government was levying salt tax from the people living in the area, and the King contested its right to do so.

At the same time, with a touch of optimism, he mentioned an even older dispute. The Fifth Dalai Lama had taken away most of the lands belonging to the Bhutanese-owned monastery of Tö-ling Tsurpo (Tib.), a day's journey from Lhasa. Could the British government put pressure on Lhasa to return this property? Bell duly consulted his superiors in the Government of India Foreign Department on both issues. Their conclusion was that it was *“unnecessary to consider the question of supporting the Maharaja unless and until serious contingencies of graver importance should arise.”*

The tax issue remained unsettled, and in the 1920s the Lhasa government intensified its efforts to increase its revenue: among other expensive projects it wished to set up an army trained on British lines.²⁹ The Tibetan government's agricultural department, the *so-nams las-khungs*, began to register the residents of the Darchen area, who were mainly pastoral nomads, and to tax them accordingly. The King of Bhutan continued to object and engaged in 'acrimonious correspondence' with the Tibetan government.³⁰

In 1927 the murder of Nathi Johari, a trader from Almora district, created a further source of tension.³¹ He was among a group of traders who had stopped for the night at Larchen Dik, some 15 miles from Darchen, when they were attacked by bandits. Nathi Johari was wounded, and carried to Darchen, where he died. He had been a British subject, and the Government of India was therefore keen to secure the punishment of the murderers. The Garpons duly put pressure on the lama in charge of Darchen monastery (the incident took place during an interregnum between *rdor-'dzin*). However, the Bhutanese pointed out that the attack had taken place outside their territory, even though Nathi Johari had subsequently died within it. In any case they had little prospect of capturing an unidentified bandit. The Garpons were not satisfied with this reply: the case dragged on for several years, and was never satisfactorily settled.

In 1930 Bhutan's appointment of Tobdan La (*Stobs-ldan-lags*) to administer Darchen led to further tensions.³² He was a layman rather than a monk, and the Lhasa authorities claimed that his appointment was contrary to established practice. Tobdan La's forceful approach to the tax issue further antagonised them: he took back as Darchen subjects a number of people who had previously been registered by the *so-nams las-khungs*. The Garpons responded by forcing these subjects to give up their Bhutanese nationality, and beat some of them severely. Eventually, Lhasa succeeded in securing Tobdan La's withdrawal. The Garpons appointed a Tibetan official, the former Ta-tsam (Tib?) of Barkha to be in charge of Darchen.

In 1932 King Jigme Wangchuk of Bhutan appealed to Frederick Williamson, the Political Officer Sikkim to take up the Darchen dispute during a forthcoming visit to Tibet.³³ Williamson thought that the matter was *“really a religious one”* and the British should intervene as little as possible. However, he responded to the King's request because he was *“extremely pressing”* and because he thought the atmosphere in Lhasa was *“favourable to the receipt of friendly suggestions.”* Williamson duly brought up the matter in Lhasa.

In his report Williamson pointed out that the tax issue “raises the question whether Darchin is Bhutanese territory, as His Highness of Bhutan would claim, or whether it is merely an estate in Tibetan territory held by him, as the Tibetan government would claim.” However, he added that this point had been “avoided by both sides.” It appears that they continued to avoid it thereafter, although the Tibetan government responded to Williamson’s initiative by sending a conciliatory letter to the King of Bhutan.

Darchen came up again the reports of the British Trade Agent in 1937.³⁴ He had two concerns. The first was that the Darchen Labrang had flogged the servant of a Johari trader for assaulting a Tibetan beggar. The Agent claimed that the Labrang had no right to punish a British subject without reference to him. The second issue was that the Labrang had been levying a tax of Rs 2 per head on Johari and Darma traders since the previous year – again without the Agents knowledge. The Labrang responded to both complaints by claiming that they had the authority to do as they wished because they were subject to Bhutan rather than Tibet: they therefore were not bound by any British agreement with the Tibetan authorities concerning taxes.

Bhutan continued to administer Darchen until 1959 when it was taken over by Chinese troops. Ten years earlier Bhutan had signed a treaty with the newly independent Indian government on similar lines to the Treaty of Punakha. On Bhutan’s behalf, India raised the question of the Bhutanese enclaves with China in 1960, but the latter refused to discuss the issue.³⁵

Since then there has been no public discussion of the Bhutanese enclaves. Bhutan does not maintain formal diplomatic relations with China, but in recent years it has held a series of meetings with Chinese diplomats to discuss the two countries common boundary. It is understood that the two sides have reached broad agreement on the main issues, but there has been no formal settlement.

Conclusion: the wider context

The fact that Ladakhi and Bhutanese enclaves existed in Tibet was not in itself unusual. In the pre-modern period political linkages in the Himalaya consisted of a web of inter-relationships with many ambiguities. For example, many of the smaller kingdoms on Tibet’s southern and eastern borders belonged within Lhasas religious orbit, but at the same time found it convenient to acknowledge the temporal power of the rulers of India and China. The dividing line between political and religious obligation was frequently unclear.

As discussed in an earlier paper, Ladakh’s triennial *lo-phyag* mission to Lhasa – itself a product of the 1684 treaty of Temisgang – is one illustration of this ambiguity.³⁶ The mission brought a specified set of offerings to Tibet; it was timed to arrive at the annual *smon-lam* celebrations in Lhasa and therefore acquired religious connotations. The Tibetans apparently understood the mission to be an acknowledgement of Ladakh’s tributary status in the political as well as the religious sphere. However, Ladakh simultaneously paid tribute to the Moghuls in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, and was later fully incorporated into a princely state within Britain’s Indian empire. By the early twentieth century the *lo-phyag* had no direct political significance although it served a useful commercial purpose and was allowed to continue into the 1940s.

The Ladakhi and Bhutanese enclaves are a variation on a similar theme. In both cases the origin of the enclaves was “religious”, but at a time when there was no

precise boundary between the “religious” and “political” spheres. Another example of overlapping political jurisdictions was Nepal’s traditional entitlement to certain extra-territorial rights in Tibet, notably the right to try Nepalese subjects in Tibet (and their mixed-race descendants) accused of criminal offences.³⁷

The traditional Tibetan state could accommodate such anomalies relatively easily. However, tensions became more acute in the first half of the twentieth century when the Tibetan state was slowly becoming more centralised. As noted above, the increased requirement for taxes brought Lhasa into conflict with Bhutan over Darchen – and indeed with certain Tibetan aristocrats over their own estates. In that respect the frictions of the 1920s and the 1930s were part of a process which was taking place all over Tibet. These frictions and contradictions were never fully resolved before the Chinese destroyed the traditional Tibetan political system in its entirety.

At first sight it seems unlikely the Ladakhi and Bhutanese enclaves could have survived into the “modern” world, even without Chinese intervention. Perhaps the nearest surviving equivalents in the region are the 95 Indian enclaves (*chhit*) in northern Bangladesh and the 130 Bangladeshi equivalents in north-east India.³⁸ A total of some 100,000 Indian citizens are stranded in enclaves totally surrounded by Bangladeshi territory, and some of these are no larger than a few acres. The *chhits*’ boundaries date back to pre-independence and indeed pre-British times: they are a consequence of the confusing and frequently overlapping boundaries between the lands of the Maharaja of Cooch Behar and the Zamindar of neighbouring Rangpur. In 1947 Cooch Behar acceded to India while Rangpur became part of East Pakistan and later Bangladesh. The Indian and Bangladeshi governments have agreed in principle to exchange enclaves, but have yet to implement the agreement.

The India/Bangladesh example demonstrates the problems associated with small landlocked enclaves, but nevertheless serves as a reminder that unexpected historical anomalies may indeed survive into the late twentieth century. Nearly half a century after partition, India and Bangladesh have yet to reach formal agreement on their common frontier.

Similarly, China has yet to reach formal agreement on Tibet’s boundaries with India and Bhutan. The latter have no hope of enforcing any residual claims to sovereignty over their Tibetan enclaves, but it is conceivable that they might yet seek compensation when negotiating a final boundary settlement. In this respect it may be that the history of the enclaves is still not entirely closed.

Notes

- 1 For a discussion of Ladakh’s early links with the Drukpa sect see: Dieter Schuh. *Frühe Beziehungen zwischen dem ladakischen Herrscherhaus und der südlichen ’Brug-pa-Schule*. Archiv für zeritralasiatische Geschichtsforschung. Heft 2. Sankt Augustin: VGH Wissenschaftsverlag, 1983; Dieter Schuh, “Zu den Hintergründen der Parteinahme Ladakh’s für Bhutan im Krieg gegen Lhasa”. In *Recent Research on Ladakh*, pp. 37–50. Edited by Detlef Kantowsky and Reinhard Sander. Munich: Weitforum Verlag, 1983.
- 2 For the history of Bhutan see *inter alia*: Michael Aris, *Bhutan: the Early History of a Himalayan Kingdom* (Warminster: Aris & Phillips, 1979); Michael Aris, *The Raven Crown. The Origins of Buddhist Monarchy in Bhutan* (London: Serindia, 1994).
- 3 Schuh (1983).
- 4 Slob-dpon Padma Tshe-dbang [Lopon Pemala]: *Brug gi rgyal rabs slob dpon padma tshe dbang gis sbyar ba. Brug gsal ba’i sgron me. History of Bhutan*. (Thimphu, 1994), p. 151.

- Lopon Pemala cites the Lho'i chos-byung, fol. 37b as the source for this episode. I am grateful to Michael Aris for assistance in reading Lopon Pemala's text.
- 5 The legends surrounding the mountain are described in a guide composed by the 34th *Bri-gung gdan-rab*, *Bstan-'dzin chos-kyi blo-gros: Gangs ri chen po ti se dang mcho ma dros pa bcas kyi sngon byung gi lo rgyus mdor bsdu su brjod pal rab byed shel dkar me long*. I am grateful to Tsering Dhondhup for translating parts of this text on my behalf. Elena De Rossi Filibeck has published an edited transliteration of the text, with an annotated English summary: *Two Tibetan Guide Books to Ti se and La phyi*. Monumenta Tibetica Historica. Abteilung I Band 4. Bonn: VGH Wissenschaftsverlag, 1988.
 - 6 See also Luciano Petech, "The Bri-gung-pa sect in Western Tibet and Ladakh", in *Proceedings of the Csoma de Körös Memorial Symposium 1976*, pp. 313–325. Edited by Louis Ligeti. Budapest: Akadémiai Kiadó, 1979.
 - 7 Lopon Pemala, pp. 189–90. He does not give a source. Swami Pranavananda. *Kailas-Manasarovar*. 2nd Ed. (New Delhi: published by the author, 1983) p. 82, gives the following list of Bhutanese possessions in Tibet: *Tarchen, at the foot of Kailas, Nyanri and Zuthul-phuk Monasteries of Kailas, Cherkip Gompa of Manasarovar, the villages of Dungmar, Ringung, Doh, Khochar, Gezon near Ga rtok, Itse Gompa, Gonphu Gesur, Sammar and a few other places in Western Tibet*. See also the list cited by Sherring below.
 - 8 The text is quoted, with a German translation in Schuh, *Frühe Beziehungen* (1983), pp. 51–54.
 - 9 For the history of this war see: Luciano Petech, "The Tibetan-Ladakhi-Moghul war 1681–1683", *Indian Historical Quarterly* 23 (1947), pp. 169–199; Zahiruddin Ahmad, *New Light on the Tibet-Ladakh-Mughal War of 1679–1684*, *East and West* 18 (1968), pp. 340–361; Luciano Petech, *The Kingdom of Ladakh c.950–1842*, Rome: Is.M.E.O, 1977.
 - 10 William Moorcroft: "A journey to Lake Manasarovara in Un-des, a Province of little Tibet". *Asiatic Researches* 12 (1816), pp. 375–534.
 - 11 An English version of the treaty is cited in: Tsepon W. D. Shakabpa, *Tibet: a Political History* (New York: Potala Publications, 1982), p. 238.
 - 12 *Report of the officials of the Government of India and the People's Republic of China on the Boundary Question* (Government of India, Ministry of External Affairs, MEA 29. February 1961) p. 59.
 - 13 Oriental and India Office Collection (OIOC) British Library, London, L/P&S/7/125. Copy of a note dated the 30th May 1900 by Captain RL Kennion, Assistant to the Resident in Kashmir for Leh.
 - 14 Chaudhri Khushi Mohamad, *Preliminary Report of Ladakh Settlement*. (Jammu: Ranbir Prakash Press, 1908), pp. 2–3. I am grateful to Martijn van Beek for locating this reference.
 - 15 *Report*, p. 139 . . . The source cited for this figure is a tour report of Faqir Chand, Wazir Wazarat of Ladakh in 1905.
 - 16 It seems that there is no copy of the final settlement report in any British library, and I have yet to locate a copy.
 - 17 OIOC. L/P&S/4163. Narrative of the personal experiences of Mr E. B. Wakefield ICS in Western Tibet, 1929.
 - 18 OIOC. L/P&S/112/4164. Diaries of the British Trade Agent at Gartok. No. 113-A. Rai Bahadur Dr Kanshi Ram, BTA Gartok to Political Agent Punjab Hill States. Simla. 19 October 1939.
 - 19 Sungkil Phuntsog, "My Husband Kaga Thsetan Phunthsog", *Yarked* (Rajpur: Moravian Institute. 1988), p. 68.
 - 20 Abdul Wahid Radhu, *Caravane Tibétaine* (Paris: Fayard, 1981).
 - 21 Personal communication from Phuntsog Stobdan.
 - 22 *Report* – *ibid*.
 - 23 F. Williamson, Political Officer Sikkim in the early 1930s says that he made a copy of the Tibetan document confirming Bhutan's title. Letter from F. Williamson, Gartok, 6th January 1934. OIOC, L/P&S/12/4175. No. 1340. Williamson's letter is reprinted in: John Snelling, *The Sacred Mountain* (2nd ed. London: East-West Publications, 1990), p. 423.
 - 24 *dPal 'brug-pa rin-po-che mthu-chen ngag-gi dhang-po bka'-khrims thams-cad-las rnam-par rgyal-ba'i gnam*. Michael Aris. *Sources for the History of Bhutan* (Vienna: Arbeitskreis für tibetische und buddhistische Studien, Universität Wien, 1986), p. 147.

- 25 William Moorcroft. "A journey to Lake Manasarovara in Un-des, a Province of little Tibet". *Asiatic Researches* 12(1816), pp. 375–534.
- 26 Charles A. Sherring. *Western Tibet and the British Borderland* (London 1906; rept. New Delhi: Cosmo Publications 1974). p. 278.
- 27 See Aris (1994). Contemporary British records referred to Ugyan Wangchuk as "the Maharaja".
- 28 CA Bell to Secretary of the Government of India Foreign Department, Gangtok, 1 May 1913. London, Oriental and India Office Collection (OIOC) L/P&S/12/2223.
- 29 For the background to the Tibetan government's revenue policies see Melvyn Goldstein, *A History of Modern Tibet*, Berkeley: University of California Press, 1989.
- 30 F. Williamson – *ibid*.
- 31 Lt. Col. J. L. R. Weir, Political Officer Sikkim. to Foreign Secretary of the Government of India, Gyantse 30 July 1930. OIOC. L/P&S/12/4163-1165.
- 32 Williamson (1934).
- 33 F. Williamson (1934).
- 34 British Trade Agent Gartok to Political Agent. Punjab Hill States. 9 September 1937. OIOC. L/P&S/12/4103.
- 35 Parmanand. *The Politics of Bhutan* (New Delhi: Pragati Publications, 1992), p. 163.
- 36 John Bray, "The Lapchak Mission from Ladakh to Lhasa in British Indian Foreign Policy", *The Tibet Journal* 15(1990), No. 4, pp. 75–96.
- 37 See: Prem R. Uprety, *Nepal-Tibet Relations. 1850–1930. Years of Hopes, Challenges and Frustrations*. Kathmandu: Puga Nara, 1980.
- 38 For a recent journalistic discussion of the problems of the Indo-Bangladeshi enclaves see; Ruben Banerjee, "Land-locked lives", *India Today*, 15 March, 1995, pp. 94–95. New Delhi.

NARRATIVE OF A JOURNEY FROM TACHIENLU TO CH'AMDO AND BACK VIA BATANG

Oliver R. Coales

Source: previously unpublished report to the Government of India. File copy retained by the Oriental and India Office Collections, The British Library, London; Ref: L/P&S/11-126. Reprinted by permission of Her Majesty's Stationery Office. The original pagination has been omitted. Original spellings are preserved.

I left Tachienlu in company with Mr. Clements of the China Inland Mission on December 2nd, 1916. Crossing the Cheto pass (13,500 feet) we parted from the main road to Batang just beyond and travelling north-west reached Dau (Tao-fu) in seven days. The country traversed was a series of small valleys at high elevation containing much arable land where barley and turnips are grown. To the north-east is a magnificent glacier streaked peak known among Tibetans as the Zhara La and by Chinese as the Hai-tzu Shan, the altitude of which is probably 18,000 feet.

2. These districts which formerly belonged to the King of Chala present a scene of great desolation. Rebellions in past years and the continued pressure of *ula* have gradually driven the inhabitants away, so that from a half to two-thirds of the houses are in ruins or vacant. Empty houses in good repair show that the process of depopulation is still going on. Gold is washed in many places and the miners have ruined many tracts of agricultural land by delving beneath for gold-bearing gravel. The district has been nearly worked out. Formerly there were more than a thousand miners and the annual revenue was 30 ounces of gold. It is now only one or two ounces a year. A lucky miner might in former days obtain as much as Tls. 1,000 worth of gold in the year.

3. An easy pass called Nag-trel-hen-k'a (Sung-lin K'ou) gives access to Dau and the valley of the She Ch'u. Sung-lin K'ou is the only place on the north road continually troubled by robbers. Thick woods afford good cover for ambushes and the passage is generally unsafe for single travellers. The new magistrate of Tao-fu proposes to cut down the woods.

4. Every day on the road we met hundreds of animals, ponies, mules, yak and dzo or crossbreeds, going to Tachienlu with loads of wool, hides, deerhorns, butter, salt, etc. They all belonged to Kantzu and Rongpats'a.

5. The dzo, the hybrid of the yak cow and the ordinary bull, is a more powerful animal than the yak and can be distinguished by its long horns and short hair. While the

yak, is only used for transport the dzo is also used for ploughing and the difference in their usefulness is shown by the current prices in Tachienlu which are for the dzo 80–100 rupees, and for the yak 40–50 rupees. The offspring of the yak cow and the bull is stronger than that of the cow and the bull yak. The bull dzo is sterile, but the female or dzu-mu will produce calves which are however quite useless and are generally killed after birth. The female dzo is not generally used for transport or farming but is valued for milking purposes. It costs in Tachienlu from 40 to 50 rupees. Owing to the general rise in prices the sums mentioned are double what was paid ten years ago.

6. Dau (Tao-lu) is a small semi-Chinese town lying in a plain some five miles long by one broad. A large lamasery partially destroyed by the revolutionary troubles is situated immediately to the west. The plain which lies at an elevation of between 9,000 and 10,000 feet above sea level is warmer than Tachienlu and produces wheat, barley, peas, turnips, potatoes and even maize. Irrigation is generally employed. There are several villages. The town is the seat of the Tao-fu magistrate and of Protestant and Roman Catholic missions. The former is at present without a pastor. We arrived at Dau on the day of the dedication of a new Catholic church, which with its high bell-tower in Chinese style is conspicuous from a great distance.

7. The Tibetan inhabitants of the town and district belonged to the Drango, Mazur, Chala and Ke-she chiefs. The representative of the Mazur family, who has never been chief, resides in one of the villages nearby. A large number of Chinese have settled here as farmers and traders and are the mainstay of the two missions.

8. *December 10th.* – We left Dau and proceeded up the valley of the She Ch'u. This is the tributary which joins the Yalung above Ho-k'ou. The contrast of the prosperity of the country between Dau and Rongpats'a with the desolation nearer Tachienlu is very marked.

9. The valley of the She Ch'u is at first very narrow affording little room for cultivation except at the mouths of ravines, but towards Drango (Changku) it broadens out to a plain nearly a mile wide. This was the scene of the unsuccessful attempt at colonisation which was made 20 years ago. A Roman Catholic missionary has settled here and attracted a colony of some 70 or 80 Chinese Christian families who are gradually bringing the river valley into cultivation. Other non-Christians are also settling there.

10. The missionary has just completed the construction of a bridge across the She Ch'u for the benefit of travellers by the main road, who formerly had to cross by ferry. The river at the bridge is 35 yards in breadth.

11. Drango (Changku), the seat of the Lu-ho magistrate, is situated on a hill about 400 feet above the She Ch'u where a small plain is made at the junction of a tributary called the Nyi Ch'u (Ni-pa Kou). It consists of a chief's palace, 30 or 40 houses containing 100 families, and the large Drango Lamasery.

12. There was formerly a Hor Drango chief who owned the country round Drango and the district of Ling-ts'o adjacent to Rongpats'a. The family died out in the Chantui troubles that occurred at the end of the 19th century and the Chinese installed an official to take charge of the country and to found a colony known as the Lu-ho Tun. The colony failed and in the later troubles the colonists were either driven out or killed. When civil government was introduced by Chao Erh-feng a magistrate was stationed there.

13. The lamasery is situated at the back of the same hill as the town. It houses over 1,000 lamas and belongs to the Gelugpa sect.

14. The most interesting person at Drango is a gentleman known as the Draka Lama (Mr King referred to him as the Chake Lama – a misspelling). He lives in a small lamasery about two miles distant from the town named Ch'o-kar-teng, which contains 60 lamas, 100 nuns and a number of aged indigent women living on charity.

15. When we passed through Drango there was great unrest among the lamas on account of the activities of this man. The Draka Lama is the Reincarnation belonging to the small lamasery of Draka Gönpa near Kantzu. He is a man of great intelligence and learning, which when he was at Kantzu attracted a large following of disciples. His popularity roused against him the jealousy of the other lamaseries of Kantzu and of the K'angsar chief and the hatred culminated in an attack on his lamasery which forced him to take refuge in Chantui. When Chao Erh-feng arrived in the Marches he was emboldened to come out and take up his residence at the Ch'o-kar-teng lamasery near Drango. Here his abilities quickly brought him wealth with which, subsequently, in Yin Tutu's time, he was able to obtain from the Chinese the superintendency of 13 lamaseries, those of the Horpa states of which Drango is one. For the first few years he does not seem to have pressed his authority, but though the appointment has always been disputed by the lamaseries he succeeded in placing his nominees in positions of authority in some of them. Later on when Commissioner Lui Jui-heng was in charge at Tachienlu he obtained by the use of bribes again a confirmation of his appointment. He then proceeded to try and introduce reforms in the lamaseries such as forbidding the lamas doing manual labour, the keeping of arms and storing of grain in the temples and the unrestricted visits of women. The reforms good in themselves were violently opposed by the body of lamas, and when we passed through angry feelings had been roused to such an extent that an armed attack on the Draka Lama was feared. The Chinese Magistrates also took offence at the Draka Lama on the pretext that he was usurping their authority, though it is probable that the real reason of their opposition was the fear of disturbances. When Commissioner Yin came to Tachienlu accusations were laid against the Draka Lama by all the lamaseries and by the magistrates of Dau-fu, Lu-ho and Kantzu. The Commissioner summoned him to Tachienlu and the charges were investigated with the result that his title of superintendent was taken away. He was, however, made Vice-President of the new Buddhist Society and returned to Drango with the tale that his new appointment was much superior to the one he had lost. He brought down to Tachienlu several loads of silver which did not return to Drango and it is believed that the Commissioner was the gainer by 30,000 rupees. The Draka Lama is friendly to foreigners.

16. *December 17th.* – We left Drango and proceeded up the right bank of the She Ch'u. A dozen miles from Drango the former territory of the chief of Hor Drio (Chuwo) was entered. Hereabouts there are several hundred Chinese engaged in gold washing. On the way we passed a party of lamas armed with lances setting out for Lhasa. The night was spent at Dri-o P'odro (Chuwo), a small village of 30 houses. The *chateau* of the chief is perched in a commanding position on the summit of a small hill overlooking the river. The ex-chief, who is almost a cripple, is a dull man

of 37 years of age. His wife is intelligent. The people formerly belonging to him numbered 700 families, of whom 400 are in Dri-o and 300 at Rongpats'a.

17. The next day the valley of the She Ch'u was left behind and we crossed the La-tse-k'a pass (13,700 feet), the low waterparting dividing it from the Yalung river. On the way is the neat lamasery of Jo-ro Gonpa overlooking a small lake called K'asa Ts'o. The country hereabouts is open pastureland and was being grazed by thousands of cattle. A short descent brought us to the valley of the Yalung here a broad plain 11,000 feet above sea level, flanked on the south by the river and a high range of snow mountains and on the north by gentle grassy hills. The same evening we reached Kantzu.

18. The town of Karnze (Kantzu) lies at a distance of rather over a mile to the north of the Yalung at the mouth of a shallow ravine. Above it on the flank of a spur is the lamasery of the same name, one of the most beautiful and richest in the Marches. The town is said to contain some 300 families and is the largest town in the Marches after Tachienlu and Batang. There are a dozen Shensi musk and medicine dealers and several other petty traders.

19. Karnze was the seat of the Hor K'angsar (K'ungsa) and Hor Mazur (Ma-shu) chiefs between whom the Yalung plain here was divided. The ex-chief of K'angsar who has retained the residence of his family is a young man of 24 years of age. He is more intelligent than others of the chiefs I have met but without any experience. The Kantzu magistrate and he were on excellent terms, but unfortunately the former has now been replaced by a rapacious scoundrel and on my return I found the chief had taken refuge with his father-in-law at Beri – an example of the precarious position of wealthy Tibetans under Chinese rule. It was significant that the chief asked Mr Clements very secretly to be enrolled as a Church member. Although the K'angsar territory is not large the chief is reputed to be one of the wealthiest in the Marches.

20. At Karnze Mr. Clements left me to travel to Batang, *via* Paiyü. Shortly after leaving Karnze the road reaches the Yalung river. It is here known as the Tsa Ch'u but further on becomes the Nya Ch'u from which names Tsa-ch'u-k'a the country north of Rongpats'a, Nya-ch'u-k'a the Tibetan name for Hok'ou and Nyarong for Chantui are derived. The winter breadth is about 50 yards. The river may be crossed above Karnze or at Beri in skin coracles in winter and ferry boat in summer. Ice forms for three months in winter on both banks but the river is only in a few places frozen completely over.

21. At the ferry above Karnze an attempt has been made to throw a bridge across which is the only public work I have seen in progress in the Marches. The bridge is one of five spans, 210 yards in length, constructed on the Tibetan cantilever principle. Unfortunately the site selected only affords a foundation in the river gravel so that the middle pier is washed away every summer by the freshets. In fact without deep piling success is impossible. Nevertheless on my return I found the new magistrate starting the Sisyphean task once more – one can guess with the object of making a profit out of the expenses.

22. About nine miles from Karnze on the south bank of the Yalung is the small village of Beri situated on a long ridge projecting into the river. It is the seat of the Hor Beri (Pai-li) chief [who] resides in a rambling palace at the extremity. There are

two lamaseries, the Beri lamasery (Gelugpa, 100 lamas) on the opposite bank of the river, and the Nyara lamasery (Saskya, 100 lamas) on a rocky spur above the village. The latter has a very beautiful and conspicuous position and can be seen almost from La-tse-k'a on the east and from Lingts'o on the west. The village contains about 30 houses.

23. The ex-chief, a man of 51 years, ruled over the smallest of the Horpa states. He told me that after the invasion of the country in the latter part of the last century by the Chantui lamas the Chinese in order to maintain peace agreed to allow the Horpa states to pay a tribute of 5 or 6 rupees annually per family to the Chantui Debas. This tribute continued to be paid up to the advent of Chao-Erh-feng.

24. *December 23rd.* – From Beri to Rongpats'a we continued up the Yalung for a distance of 13 miles. The river here makes some large bends where plenty of wild duck can be shot. The valley is broad and thickly populated. Near Lingts'o (Ling-ts'ung) the river which issues from a narrow gorge is left. Two miles further on is Dargye Gönpa, a neat pleasant looking lamasery embowered in a grove of poplar trees (Gelugpa, 450 lamas). It was accidentally burnt down some years ago and has recently been rebuilt in first class style. On some maps this lamasery is called Derge Gomba as if it was connected with the state of Derge or Dege. It has in fact nothing to do with Dege and is situated in Lingts'o which formerly belonged to Drango.

25. Rongpats'a is a wealthy district formerly belonging to Hor Drio and Dege. The population was about equally divided between the two states and two officials resided here in the Drio and Adu (Dege) P'odros respectively. In addition to agriculture and grazing the people, like those of Karnze, are extensively engaged in the Lhasa tea trade. A main road to Paiyu and Batang branches off here to the south.

26. Shortly after leaving Rongpats'a we crossed an easy pass called the Jambe Lhatse (13,700 feet) into the valley of the Yi Ch'u an affluent of the Yalung. The pass is the boundary between Dege and Rongpats'a and between Kantzu and Teko magistracies. Henceforward up to the Le La pass beyond Dzogch'en we were in the "grass country" pure and simple and no more cultivation or houses were seen. The Yi Ch'u flows down a long straight valley which gradually broadens out at its north-western end to a width of 3 or 4 miles. Its average elevation is 12,300 feet and although elsewhere in the Marches cultivation is carried on at this height the early frosts here prevent it.

27. Less than half-way up in a side valley is Yilung (Yü-lung). This is the seat of a petty chief subject to Dege and contains his residence, a rest-house and a number of tents for ula people. An alternative route to Jyekundo branches off here. The place is generally known among Tibetans as Lharu-gat'o from the name of the chieftain. Yi-lung means the country of the Yi Ch'u. By old custom the Lharugat'o chief levies a tax of five (or six) rupees on every hundred loads of tea passing this way.

28. Further on the main road to Gönchen (Te-ko) branched off to the south past Yarze Gönpa (Nyimapa, 100 lamas). We then ascended the Muring pass, passing on the way a small lake called the Muring Ts'o lying in an ancient glacial valley. The lamas at Dzogch'en gave Muring as the name of the pass though Rockhill calls it Muri La. It is about 14,700 feet above sea level but it is not very difficult to ascend. Eleven miles further on we reached Dzogch'en.

29. Dzogch'en Gönpa is one of the principal lamaseries of Dege and belongs to the Nyimapa sect. There are over a thousand lamas, of whom three to four hundred are in permanent residence. The lamasery is situated on the side of a ridge at the lower end of a narrow marsh or lake and has a magnificent view of the beautiful glacier streaked peak Norbuyukyal which rises abruptly from the further end. The lama's dwellings are built in irregular clusters round the temple buildings and are not enclosed with a wall. The buildings are not so fine as those of the Horpa lamaseries but the images and chortens inside are magnificent. Below the lamasery is a village of 30 miserable huts where the lamasery serfs live. I was well received by the lamas and was housed in the comfortable residence of one of the reincarnations. The lamasery is 13,300 feet above sea level.

30. The country around Dzogch'en is purely pastoral. The village below, which is called Gön-t'a-ma, is a regular halting place for the tea caravans going to Jyekundo. Transport animals are usually changed here. The charges are 2 rupees a load to Seishu (Shih-ch'u) and 3½ to 4 to the Drenda ferry over the Dre Ch'u. The place is also visited by the Shensi musk and medicine merchants of whom one or two are usually in residence.

31. At Dzogch'en a branch road leads north to Seishu. A few miles further on I left the Jyekundo main road and turned south across the Le La pass (14,800 feet). From Kantzu onwards the valleys of the Yalung and Yi Ch'u though traversing a limestone region are flanked on the south-west by a high and rugged range of granite mountains in which glaciers are frequently seen. This range is known at Kantzu as K'awalori and at Dzogch'en as Norbuyukyal. Beyond Dzogch'en the granite disappears under the limestone and at the Le La only the latter rock is to be seen.

32. Beyond the Le La the aspect of the country completely changes. The valleys trending towards the Dre Ch'u or Chin-sha Chiang are narrower and deeper and generally thickly clothed with woods of conifers. In many places the scenery is unsurpassed for grandeur. At the gorge between K'olondo and Gönch'en and elsewhere the limestone has been cut by the river into a deep chasm shut in by abrupt cliffs rising sheer a thousand feet or more. The road finds a precarious footing in the deep gloom at the bottom where it is again and again forced by precipices to cross the rushing torrent which made the gorge.

33. On this part of the road where the valley opens out and affords some agricultural land many ruined houses and lands gone out of cultivation are to be seen. The desolation is due to the ravages of the Chantui Lamas and of the Chinese expedition sent to expel them at the close of the last century and to the fratricidal feud of the two claimants to the Dege Chieftaincy.

34. Gönch'en which is two days' journey from Dzogch'en I reached on December 30th. It lies at the junction of a small ravine with the river Zi Ch'u. The site is very restricted being nowhere more than 100 yards broad and without any level ground whatever. On all sides the mountains rise steeply to 2,000 feet. The village is really nothing but the palaces of the ex-king of Dege and his brother the pretender and the temples and houses of the lamasery of Hlun-drub-ten. The houses occupied by lay people are rented from the lamas.

35. The royal palace is the finest specimen of Tibetan secular architecture in the Marches. It is a massive square building of three storeys enclosing a courtyard, or,

rather, a well. The basement is as usual an untidy stable. The next storey houses the servants and officials and contains storerooms. In the upper storey are the royal apartments. The audience and dwelling rooms are very spacious and are fine examples of purely native painting and carving. The palace is now occupied by the Te-ko (not Te-hua as formerly) magistrate and is slowly falling into a state of delapidation. Considering his small salary which is always in arrears it can hardly be expected that the magistrate should spend money on repairs, but it seems unreasonable to allow the living rooms to be defiled by wandering pigs, fowls and other unclean animals.

36. The lamasery of Hlun-drub-ten belongs to the Saskya sect to which most of the smaller lamaseries in Dege adhere. It contains 300 lamas and is claimed to be the largest lamasery of its sect in the whole of Tibet. The appearance of the lamasery is strange. The temple buildings which are large and numerous are painted deep red and on their upper storeys have gilded roofs and pinnacles. The lama's houses following the Saskya custom are striped in broad vertical bands of red, white and blue and the strange mixture of colours gives the village a bizarre aspect. The gilded images, chortens, and paintings are of the finest work and, though Derge is noted for its brass ware, are attributed to Ch'amdo workmen.

37. Gönch'en is the headquarters of the 5th battalion of Pien Chun troops which is distributed along the north road from T'ung-p'u to Kantzu.

38. There is little trade at Gönch'en and that consists of musk, deerhorns, etc. Odds and ends of foreign goods come down from Jyekundo, among other things Japanese matches and cigarettes from India. The latter are sold at two rupees a hundred. Just above Gönch'en a little gold washing is done by some two score Chinese. There are three Shenshi traders in the village and about 100 Chinese, excluding the miners, settled in the district. In the vicinity of Gönch'en there is little pastoral country and the pressure of ula is very severely felt. During the winter a serious epidemic of cattle disease has been raging.

39. From Gönch'en I followed the Zi Ch'u down to its junction with the Dre Ch'u or Chin-Sha Chiang a distance of 16 miles. The Dre Ch'u here is about 80 yards broad in winter and flows in a placid turquoise blue stream between steep mountains and cliffs. Its height above sea level is 10,000 feet. In order to reach the village of Kang-t'o on the west bank the river is crossed in skin coracles. The river was frozen over in a few places, strong enough to allow it to be crossed on foot.

40. Two days later T'ung-p'u was reached. The road follows the Dre Ch'u down for a mile and then turns up a narrow ravine and crosses a high pass called the Nge La (14,000 feet). There is a rapid descent down to the Do Chu a tributary of the Chin-Sha where at the Saskya Lamasery of Wara a road branches off to Jyekundo.

41. T'ung-p'u the seat of the magistracy of the same name consists of a magistrate's residence built on a ridge at the confluence of the Dzi Ch'u and the Do Ch'u. Below it in a small plain $\frac{3}{4}$ mile long by $\frac{1}{4}$ broad are 13 scattered Tibetan houses known among Tibetans as Rang-sum. The magistrate was placed in this solitary position because it is at or near the junction of roads leading to Gönchen, Jyekundo, Ch'amdo, Gonjo and Pelyul (Paiyü). There is no trade or business at all at the village. A copper mine was opened some years ago near Wara Gönpa but is now abandoned. There are said to be a dozen Shenshi merchants and altogether about a hundred Chinese in the district.

42. At K'argang (K'a-kung) one stage from T'ung-p'u a road branches off southward to Gonjo. A little further on the cultivated valley of the Dzi Ch'u was left and for the next two days we traversed open grass country. Except resthouses there are no houses or cultivation. We crossed here the territory of the former independent chief of Lhato (Nato). His seat is a day's journey north of the road. There are three passes all over 14,000 feet high. They are all however quite easy.

43. The last two days before reaching Ch'amdo are spent crossing the Japed La, descending to the Nge Ch'u and crossing the Tama La to the Mekong. Both these passes are high, the former being 15,700 feet and the latter 15,000 feet above sea level. Both passes are very difficult. The descent from the Japed La to Reya on the Nge Ch'u is 3,500 feet in four miles. The true waterparting between the Yangtse and Mekong valleys and the boundary between Ch'amdo and Lhato is the Lazhi La, the pass crossed the day before the Japed, La. The latter however crosses a very abrupt ridge of limestone bluffs which appear to have been thrust through the overlaying sandstones. The ridge is part of a line of limestone mountains which follow the direction of the Mekong valley and die away under the sandstones of the Me Ch'u near Draya or else bend eastwards towards Gonjo. The main road to Draya from Ch'amdo crosses it beyond Paotun where the ridge is known as the K'ulung Shan by Chinese. On the east side are grey sandstones with occasional outcrops of limestone, on the west the red sandstones of the Mekong valley.

44. On January 9th, 1917, descending from the Tama La, I arrived at the bank of the Mekong and found that the Ch'angtu magistrate was in attendance with the Paochengs of the district to meet me. For my reception two tents had been pitched which we entered and after greetings had been exchanged, drank some tea and wine. The magistrate was naturally curious as to the reason of my visit but I told him I was merely travelling round to see the country. I am inclined to believe that General Peng and he were suspicious that I had a private commission from the new Frontier Commissioner to report on the state of affairs. This little reception over we rode on over the Szechuan Bridge into the town. There I stayed several days and was treated with great cordiality both by the General and the other officials.

45. The town and lamasery of Ch'amdo (Ch'angtu) is situated on a spit of land lying between the Mekong or Dza Ch'u and the Om Ch'u, at their junction. The spit which is one and a half miles long and half a mile broad is joined on the north to the mainland by a neck a quarter of a mile broad. The town lies on the low ground at the junction of the rivers while the lamasery was to the north on a level plateau 150 feet above it. The Mekong washes the east side and the Om Ch'u the west. The Mekong which has a breadth in winter of 60 yards is crossed three quarters of a mile above the town by a cantilever bridge of three spans 81 yards long. The bridge over the Om Ch'u (breadth 3.2 yards), is just above the junction of the two rivers and is of four spans having a total length of 84 yards. The construction of both bridges had been facilitated by the existence of sandstone ridges in the river beds. The Mekong bridge is known as the Szechuan bridge and, that over the Om Ch'u as the Yunnan Bridge because they give access to roads to Szechuan and Yunnan respectively.¹ They are famous all over the Marches. The Szechuan Bridge is the lowest bridge over the Mekong with the exception of any bridges recently constructed by the French in Indo-China.

The following are details of the dimensions:-

Szechuan Bridge.

Breadth of spans east to west to centre of piers, 22, 35, and 24 yards.

Dimensions of piers, 14 yards long by 7 broad.

Height of roadway above winter level, 14 yards.

Breadth of roadway 10 feet.

Yunnan Bridge.

Breadth of spans east to west to centre of piers 18, 32, 24 and 10 yards.

Dimensions of piers much the same as Szechuan Bridge.

Height of road way above winter level, 12 yards.

Breadth of roadway 10 feet

The approaches to the two bridges are level as the rivers flow in deep troughs. At the Ch'amdo ends are fortified gatehouses. In winter the water flows under all the arches of the Szechuan Bridge but only under two of those of the Yunnan Bridge. The piers are made of lozenge shaped casings of interlaced logs filled with stones and resting on the rock in the river beds.

46. It is only below the confluence at Ch'amdo, that the Mekong is known by the Chinese as the Lan-ts'ang Chiang. By some the Om Ch'u, the smaller of the two, is considered the source of the Lan-ts'ang Chiang. The Tibetan name Dza Ch'u applies to the Mekong above and below Ch'amdo.

47. Excepting two small patches on the further banks of the rivers, one of which is used as a parade ground, there is no level ground near Ch'amdo. The two rivers flow in deep troughs from which the mountains, bare except for low brushwood, generally rise steeply to the height of 1,500 or 2,000 feet. Towards the north the mountains are of less elevation but also steep. The situation of Ch'amdo is therefore circumscribed and on account of the absence of villages and cultivation rather desolate, an appearance which is accentuated by the dismal ruins of the lamasery. The altitude above sea-level is about 10,600 feet.

48. The name Ch'amdo (Ch'abs-mdo) mean "The Meeting of the Waters" and from the town has been applied to the district. The Chinese call it Ch'angtu or Ch'amuto. Ch'angtu is an old name and is derived from Ch'ang and Tu which are alleged to be the name of the two rivers. These names are however not in use and it seems more likely that Ch'angtu is a fancy transcription of Ch'amdo. The Great Lamasery of Ch'amdo was called Ge-ten-jam-pa Ling (Dge-ltan-byam-pa Gling).

49. The Lamasery of Ch'amdo was built in a commanding position on the flat ridge above the town. Its former glories as the largest and most opulent monastery in Eastern Tibet are well known. It is now a scene of utter desolation. Crumbling walls and heaps of rubbish, among which the ruins of the principal temple rise gauntly, are all that remain. Every part of the site has been again and again delved and dug over by Chinese in the search for treasure. Here and there one may pick up a few clay images and traces of paintings can be seen on some of the walls but everything the least value, even charred timber, has been carried off. Few, if any, of the lamas have

returned to Ch'amdo and no attempt to rebuild has been made, nor is there any other lamasery in the town to house them.

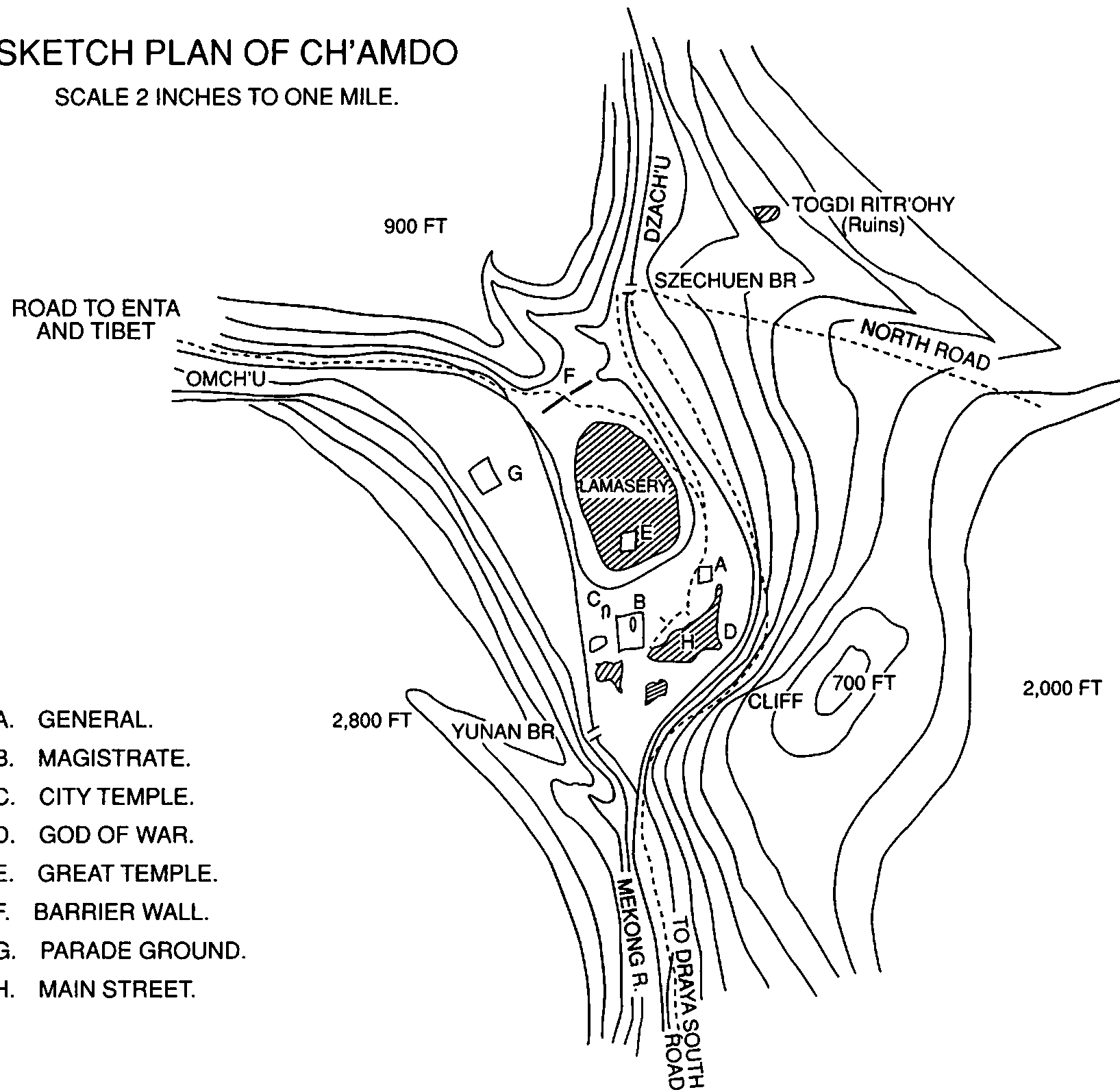
50. Great blame cannot be attached to the Chinese for the ruin of the lamasery as its destruction was a matter of life and death to the garrison. I will give an account of this elsewhere. The town itself lying exposed to Tibetan fire from all sides was also almost completely destroyed. It lies on the low ground between the junction of the rivers and the foot of the lamasery hill. There are several Chinese *yamens* and temples and a couple of hundred squalid houses of one and two storeys scattered in three or four clusters amongst heaps of rubbish on which dogs, pigs and fowls roam at will. Abbe Huc's description – Its (large) houses, constructed with frightful irregularity are scattered confusedly over a large tract, leaving on all sides unoccupied ground or heaps of rubbish. The numerous, population you see in the different quarters are dirty, uncombed and wallow in profound idleness – is true of to-day. There is one narrow street or "Kai" where are a few miserable shops the total goods in which could be bought up for a hundred dollar note. The magistrate has a small yamen in a walled enclosure which also serves for a camp. General P'eng lives in a Yamen improvised out of a temple. The Chinese temples which have been repaired, are in good condition though small. They include a Ch'eng Huang Miao (City Temple) and temples to Kuan-ti, Kuan-yin and God of the Tanta Shan. There is also a small Muhammadan mosque dating from the 18th century.

51. In the flourishing days of the Lamasery Ch'amdo was the largest centre of trade between Batang and Jyekundo. Lying at the junction of roads from Batang and Atuntzu, from Dege, Jyekundo and Tibet, it drew its supplies from all these sources and was a distributing centre, though not to a very large extent, for the country to the west. Since the lamasery, the mainstay of the town with its abundant, wealth was destroyed, and since the main road to Tibet was closed, trade has been almost at a stand-still. The small business that is done is confined to supplying the wants of the soldiers and the local population. Some seven or eight Shensi men remain but their trade in musk etc., is so small that, they say, they simply cannot pay their way home. In the old days these men could always obtain loans from the lamasery for carrying on their business. There are rather more than 30 Muhammadan families coming mainly from Sungp'an and Yunnan. They are small traders such as butchers, etc. When the lamasery existed 40 to 50 Chinese silversmiths carried on their trade in the town, making the Ch'amdo ornaments which are commonly worn in Eastern Tibet. Little more than a score of them remain and for the most part these have been obliged by a lack of custom to take to other trades, such as spirit distilling. In the town altogether there are more than 100 Chinese and 60 Tibetan families. By Chinese families are of course meant Chinese with Tibetan wives. Such Chinese are more often than not half-castes. Ch'amdo born Chinese are frequently met elsewhere in the Marches.

52. On January 17th I left Ch'amdo, for Riwoch'e (Lei-wu-ch'i). We ascended the valley of the Om Ch'u the river which joins the Mekong at Ch'amdo. Though villages and cultivation are frequent there is a good deal of vacant ground unfit for agriculture on account of lack of water. The larger rivers usually flow in deep beds so that only the streams from side ravines are available for irrigation. In the lower valleys such as those of the Yangtse and Mekong the Tibetan seldom attempts to grow crops by

SKETCH PLAN OF CH'AMDO

SCALE 2 INCHES TO ONE MILE.



- A. GENERAL.
- B. MAGISTRATE.
- C. CITY TEMPLE.
- D. GOD OF WAR.
- E. GREAT TEMPLE.
- F. BARRIER WALL.
- G. PARADE GROUND.
- H. MAIN STREET.

natural rainfall. I think this may be due rather to the rains falling at unsuitable seasons than to a deficiency in the fall.

53. At Nguro the river is crossed to the right bank by a cantilever bridge of three spans 57 yards in length. Nearby is a pretty garden and grove of trees formerly belonging to the Reincarnation of Ch'amdo. The country house is in ruins. The name is T'ong-kar-ting.

54. At Lamda (Langtang Kou) one leaves the valley of the Om Ch'u for that of the Dzi Ch'u the river of Riwoch'e. We had to cross a steep and difficult pass called the Nam-ts'o La by Tibetans and Kuo-chio Shan by Chinese. It is about 15,200 feet in altitude and over 4,000 feet above Lamda. The ascent is up a steep and densely wooded ravine some of the timber in which is of very great size. The Nam-ts'o La has a worse reputation among Tibetans than among Chinese who have a greater fear of the Waho Shan the pass on the main road beyond Enta. The latter, I am told is not very difficult but its danger lies in the fact that at the summit the road continues at a high elevation, probably over 14,000 feet, for half a day journey so that travellers in winter are exposed to sudden snowstorms and risks of exhaustion and frostbite. In summer the crossing is not feared. Abbe Huc gives a highly coloured description of his own experiences.

55. The Dzi Ch'u is reached at Bemda just below the resthouse of Lagon (Lakung). It is a stream about 50 yards broad in winter and flows through a wooded valley which is cultivated in many places along its course. English maps make it a tributary of the Salween, while the Russian Staff map makes it flow into the Mekong. Information from Tibetans indicated that the latter was correct but Tibetans are generally so untrustworthy that I cannot be sure. A little above Bemda it is crossed by a cantilever bridge of three spans. The Chinese itineraries call this Sung-lo Ch'iao from a village Solopa some distance above it, but the local Chinese call it Pien-ta Ch'iao and the Tibetans Gyalpo Zampa.

56. Enta, reached on the 19th January, is a poor little village of 20 houses with a patch of cultivation round it. It is the seat, of the Enta Magistrate who rules over a population of 200 families. The Paochengs came to see me and made a pitiful complaint about the hardships of ula and the miseries of the people. The magistrate has nothing else to do but to beat up ula. A battalion of Pien Chun troops is stationed here. Just below Enta we crossed the boundary of Ch'amdo and Riwoch'e and of Ch'angtu and Enta.

57. The day I arrived at Enta a report was brought in of a fight between the Tibetans and Chinese at Huan Ho half a day's journey further toward Riwoch'e. The Chinese version was that a band of 60 Tibetan soldiers had come over to rob a village on the Chinese side. A messenger was sent posthaste to the detachment at Huan Ho and a party of 20 soldiers was despatched to punish the marauders. Some shots were exchanged but the Tibetans withdrew without the fighting resulting in any casualties on either side. The affair was of no importance though the battalion commanders who had gone to Ch'amdo for the New Year festivities were hastily sent back to Enta and Riwoch'e.

58. At Enta, the old main road to Tibet branches of south to cross the Waho Shan to Maya Ch'iao on the Salween two days' distant. The Tibetan name of Chiayü Ch'iao is Shabye Zange Shab-gyas-bzang.

59. I reached Riwoch'e (Leiwuch'i) on January 20th. The Lamasery of Riwoch'e lies in a valley about a quarter of a mile wide on the left bank of the Dzi Ch'u at the foot of a wooded mountain. The lamasery buildings which are erected in a long row are rather delapidated, a condition which is not improved by their being the quarters of a battalion of soldiers. Towards the west, standing somewhat apart, is a large and lofty temple called by the Chinese the Yo Kung Tien. It is so-called because the famous General Yo Chung-Ch'i returning from Tibet after the campaigns in Tibet in the 18th century, presented the lamasery with trophies of captured weapons and armour. These still decorate the interior. Enclosing the lamasery and a large open space in front of it is a thick mud wall in ruinous condition which is 12 feet high and encloses a parallelogram 400 yards by 200 in extent.

60. The lamasery belongs to one of the Red sects. It contains now only 200 lamas though formerly it had as many as five hundred. On account of the annoyance of the soldier the Chief Reincarnation, the Je-drung Rinpoche has been obliged to remove to a small hermitage a mile distant.

61. Just outside the lamasery wall is a miserable little village, of less than a score of houses. In the days of their power the lamas objected to secular buildings spoiling their view of their lamasery. A rule was accordingly enforced that no conspicuous house was to be built above ground. The result is that the village appears to be half buried. None of the houses have windows but are lighted from above by skylights. The owner of the largest house in the place which was the one I stayed in, had had to pay heavily for building it slightly higher than the rest, and yet it was only lighted from the roof.

62. Riwoch'e was an important centre for the collection of musk, medicines etc., and even now when most of the district is cut off affords business for eight Shensi men. The latter complain however that the officials interfere in their business. The Paocheng had the usual dismissive story of the condition of the people.

63. From Riwoch'e I returned to Ch'amdo, arriving there on the 24th January. On the way we met 20 Tibetan pilgrims of the Lung-ch'ing district south of Jyekundo (on the maps the Nanchen Gyalpo) returning from a visit to the K'awa Karpo (snow white) Mountain in Yunnan. This is known I believe in Chinese as Chikung Shan and is a favourite place of pilgrimage among the Tibetans of these districts. The pilgrims bring back one or two bamboos apiece which they hang up inside their houses as a mascot.

64. We left Ch'amdo on the 29th January and for the first two days followed the main road south as far as Paotun having left the Mekong two miles below Ch'amdo. We then turned off by a small road to Yantait'ang first crossing a pass called the P'udug La 14,200 feet high. Beyond the pass we re-entered the Mekong valley and continued to follow it at a height of over 13,000 feet for ten miles. There are several villages here and cultivation is carried on almost up to the 14,000 foot line. Three miles to the west the Mekong could be seen as a silver streak in a deep trough, and an extensive view was obtained of the mass of mountains separating it from the Salween. These which rise to a uniform level and have no outstanding peaks appear to be of the same red sandstone as that on the eastern side of the river. A few forests are to be seen but not of great extent.

65. Another pass, the Yang La 14,700 feet, brought us into the valley of Ja Ch'u, a small stream which we followed down to its junction with the Me Ch'u the river of

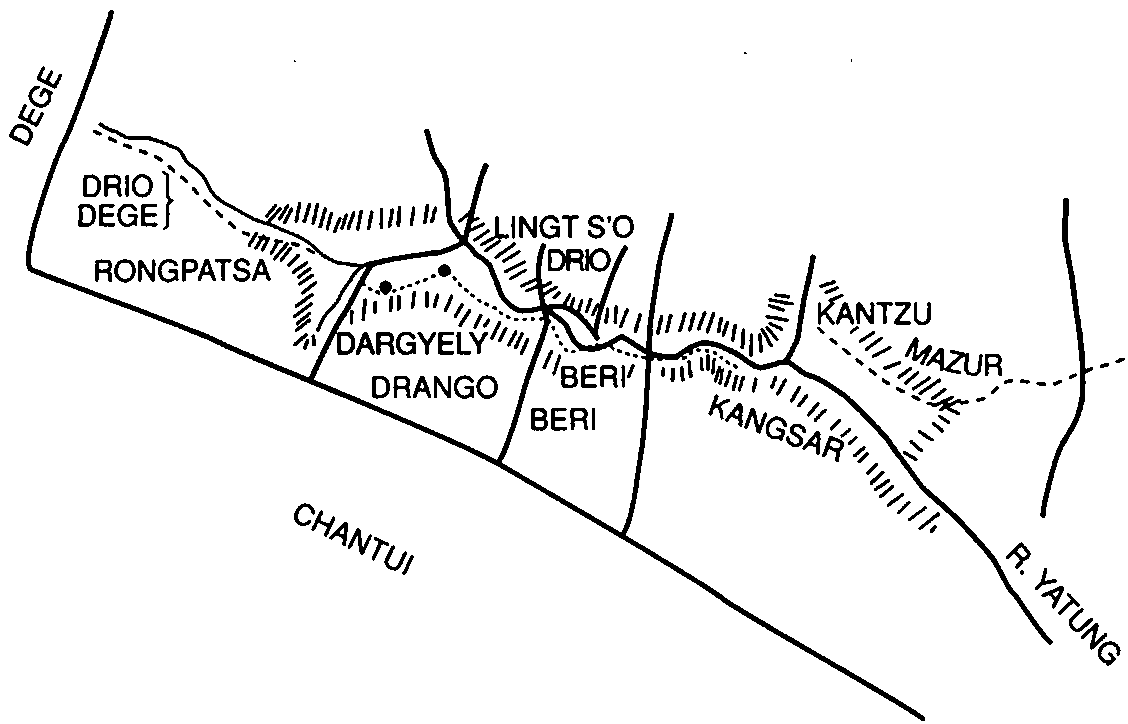
Draya. The valley though narrow is much cultivated and there are many villages. The red sandstone mountains become very barren as the Mekong is approached and one would gather that the rainfall in the lower part of Draya is deficient.

66. At Towa (Tung-wa) where the Ja Ch'u and the Me Ch'u meet is a small military post. As this place is only a few miles from the Mekong I persuaded the Commandant to allow me to go down with an escort. The Me Ch'u enters Mekong by a narrow gorge. At the junction the latter flows in a deep trough about a mile long between bare mountains rising 2,000 feet direct from the water's edge. Where the Me Ch'u enters there is a ferry house but the ferrymen and boats had been carried off by the Tibetans and the house was only occupied by women. When we arrived there was no one to be seen on the opposite side except a solitary herdsman high up on the mountains. He was out of earshot but hurried off when he saw my party.

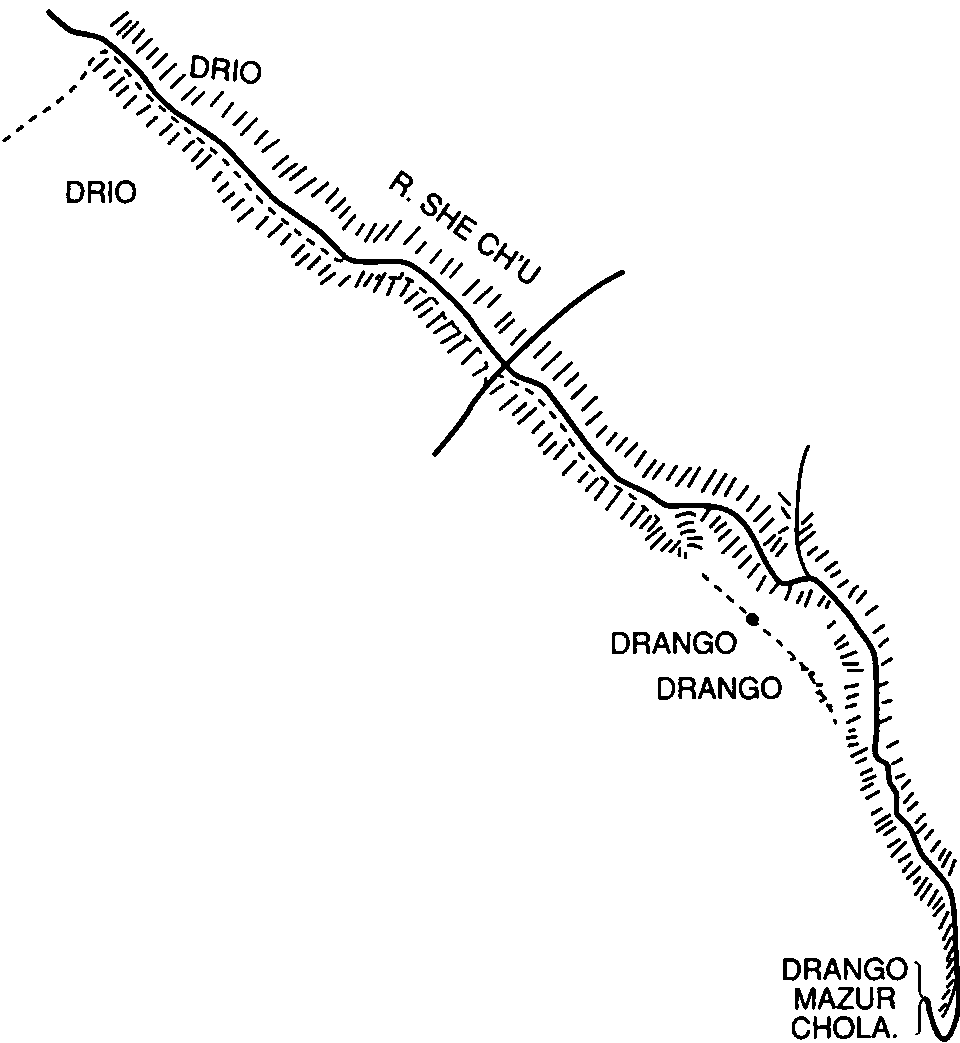
67. The soldiers were rather afraid that concealed Tibetans might open fire when they saw our armed party, but I persuaded them to come up to the northern bend to obtain a glimpse beyond. We found it deserted. When we had returned to the ferry house an unarmed man in ordinary Tibetan clothes appeared from the southern bend and after inspecting us from a distance returned to report. A short time afterwards about ten men armed with rifles, but evidently local levies as they wore no uniform, came round the corner and stealthily made their way towards us along the opposite bank, hiding behind every available rock and barricade as they came along. They were led by a man in red. At the same time another armed party emerged and clambered along the mountain side high up opposite us. Both parties halted at a distance and inspected us for some time. In the meanwhile my men had been making the ferry woman halloo to them that there was no danger and that they should come along and parley. After much hesitation they approached nearer and finally the man in red and two from the upper party came and sheltered behind a barricade just within talking distance. I then made my interpreter speak to them but hearing was so difficult that he was only able to tell them who I was and what I was doing and after making them understand it we broke off the parlay and returned to Towa. I however left a slip of paper with my name at the ferry house to be sent across the river when we had left.

68. Three miles above Towa near the Me Ch'u is the ruined lamasery of Yengmdo (Yen-tai T'ang). This lamasery was the principle lamasery of Draya and in the days of its prosperity contained over 1,000 lamas. It lies on a ridge at the north side of the valley where it broadens out to a width of one-third of a mile. Below the lamasery towards the west is a village of some two score houses and a pleasure garden and grove formerly belonging to the Chief Reincarnation of Draya. In the rebellions of 1912, 1913 and 1914 the lamasery was totally destroyed by the Chinese and it now presents an appearance similar to Ch'amdo. The buildings which were built in a row along the brink of an old shore line must have been exceptionally large. The Chief Reincarnation of Draya resided at Yengmdo in the winter and at Draya in the summer. There is a battalion of Pien Chün troops stationed at Yentai T'ang.

69. Draya is two days journey from Yengmdo. For a day and a half the valley of the Me Ch'u is ascended. Though the mountains are bare the valley is generally cultivated and there are many villages. It has been devastated by two rebellions but does not



SCALE 10 MILES TO 1 INCH.



show many traces of desolation. Below Draya the Me Ch'u makes a large bend which is avoided by crossing a pass, the Ge La, 14,700 feet.

70. The Magistrate of Draya, with whom I was acquainted, laid himself out to be very hospitable. Some distance out of the town he had prepared two tents for my reception and here all the chief inhabitants and the troops were waiting. Having had tea and wine during which a troupe of Tibetan actors had performed we formed up into a long cavalcade and rode into the town where good quarters had been prepared.

71. The lamasery and the town of Draya (Ch'aya) are situated at the western and upper side of a plain about a square mile in extent which slopes down to the confluence of three small streams which join to form the Me Ch'u. The plain is well cultivated and contains four small villages besides the town. The mountains around the plain to the north, east and south which are not very lofty are of bare reddish and greenish sandstones.

72. The principal lamasery, the proper name of which is Bu-gön²-she-drub-ch'o-k'or (Bu-dgon-bshad-bsgrub-ch'os-k'or) was second in importance to Yengmdo and housed about 800 lamas. The Chief Reincarnation and ruler of Draya used to reside here in the summer and as Draya is on the main road to Ch'amdo and Tibet it was natural that it should become the seat of Government. The lamasery is a complete ruin except for one large three storey building now occupied by soldiers.

73. The town though in great part destroyed did not suffer so severely as Ch'amdo. Several large buildings remain. Among them is a lamasery building of one courtyard, having a golden roof, in the lower part of town. It is inhabited by a score or so of lamas. Adjacent is an old lamasery long abandoned by the lamas and now used as the official residence of the magistrate. There is also a large three storey building belonging to the former Ts'ang-dru-pa or Chief Minister. In addition there are three or four other large houses and a number of smaller ones numbering in all less than a hundred.

74. Draya (Brag-gyab), literally "Rock Shelter", is the name of the district and is said to originate from the fact that the first missionary lama to convert the people lived in a cave. The name of the town in Tibetan is Jamdün or Jamdüs (Byam-ldun or ldus).

75. The town contains 150 Tibetan families, 80 families formerly attached to the lamasery, seven or eight Chinese families and half a dozen tradesmen. There is only one Shensi musk dealer and one Muhammadan from Sungp'an who trades with Yunnan. The chief trade in former days seems to have been with Yunnan but it is now practically non-existent. There are no industries worthy of note.

76. The Magistrate of Ch'aya I found on very good terms with the Tibetans. Being a fluent speaker of Tibetan he is able to converse with them without an interpreter, and although through his extravagant habits always in needy circumstances he evinced a greater sympathy with the natives than is usually shown by Chinese officials.

77. Draya is about 12,000 feet above sea level and the Mekong below Yentai T'ang just over 10,000 feet.

78. From Draya to Batang I travelled by a minor road via Gonjo instead of by the main road through Chiang-k'a (Gartok). By the main road Batang is 11 days distant but even though a detour to the south is made the time is excessive. The reason is that Their Excellencies the Ambans to Lhasa took their journey easily and to suit them

stages were made to average about twenty miles. By the short road Batang is reached in six days but the stages are very long. The telegraph line from Batang to Ch'amdo followed this road. It has not been re-established since the revolution. The two stages between Draya and Gonjo are part of a main road that joins the North Road to Ch'amdo at K'argang.

79. Leaving Draya on February 14th we crossed the Me Ch'u by a bridge and ascended one of its affluents. At eight miles from Draya the main south road branched off to the south while we continued eastwards. The mountains were rather bare and cultivation and villages were not frequent. The next day a double pass, the Zhonzi La, 14,700 feet was crossed. It is the boundary of Draya and Gonjo and the waterparting between the Mekong and the Chinsha. Here some limestone outcrops appear. A steep descent down the uninhabited ravine brought us to Gonjo.

80. Gonjo (Kungchueh) is the seat of the Kung Hsien magistrate. It is situated in a deep defile through which the Ma Ch'u flows north on its way to join the Chinsha Chiang. On a high spur is a delapidated Dzong or residence of the former Deba of Gonjo. Below it by the river is a cluster of 13 houses and a new magistrate's yamen. On the mountain side opposite is a small lamasery called Drogen Gönpa which has been burnt and contains only nine lamas. A garrison of 39 men occupies the Dzong. Gonjo is of no commercial importance. The main road to K'argang and Gönch'en branches off to the north following the river. Gonjo is about 12,000 feet above sea level.

81. From Gonjo we turned south-east ascending the Ma Ch'u as far as a village named K'ongsar a distance of five miles. The valley is cultivated throughout and there are several villages. K'ongsar was for some years the seat of the magistrate. There is a very hot spring close by.

82. The road to Sanai (Wuch'eng) continues up the Ma Chu but we branched off south and ascended a long uninhabited valley which brought us eventually into open grass country and to an easy pass called the Do La. It is the boundary of Gonjo and Chiangk's. There were many herds of cattle and encampments of nomads at one of which we spent the night.

83. On the 17th we descended to the Ong Ch'u a river of the Chiangk's the principal village of which is Taragamda. The Ong Ch'u is said to join the Chinsha Chiang near Chupalung. The valley is thickly wooded and the lower part is a very beautiful combination of forest and arable land. The valley is left Uk'ang and before the Yangtse is reached two steep and very difficult passes must be crossed. Both are about 15,700 feet above sea level. The last stage before Batang is at Shisongong, altitude 12,500 feet, on an open cultivated slope high above the Yangtse. From Shisongong to the river a distance of two miles the drop is 3,500 feet and the road zigzags down what is practically a precipice to the ferry at Nyugu (Niuku). From Niuku a short march of seven miles by the main south road brought us to Batang in the afternoon of February 20th.

84. Batang is so well known that there is no necessity to describe it here. It has the most bustling appearance of any place in the Marches after Tachienlu but whatever business is carried on is local. Direct trade with Tibet is stopped by the closing of the frontier and merchants who have relations there carry on their business through Atuntzu in Yunnan. The Yunnanese merchants who go to Lhasa are generally provided,

I understand, with a pass from the principal lamasery of Gyedang or Chungtien in the Tibetan part of Yunnan.

85. There are numerous small Chinese shops and a busy market street in Batang. The former official attempts to colonize the country were wiped out by the rebellions after the revolution, but since the restoration of order new Chinese colonists have settled in the lower part of the Batang valley and much new land is being opened by irrigation.

86. There are both Protestant and Roman Catholic missions at Batang. The former belongs to the American Foreign Christian Mission and maintains four European families. It is well supported from home and has opened a school, hospital and industrial institute, but owing to the rebellions its activities are still rather in embryo. The Roman Catholic Mission is represented by one priest. Neither mission seems to have made great headway in conversions. The experience of Roman Catholic and Protestant missionaries throughout the Marches is that successful proselytising among the Tibetans is a matter of the greatest difficulty owing to their profound superstition and unshakeable faith in the Lamas. The only successful plan is to educate from childhood, a practice common with the Catholics. As elsewhere the Chinese are the mainstay of both missions.

87. The palaces of the old Batang Debas have been taken over the one by the Pa-an Magistrate, the other by the Roman Catholic mission in compensation for the premises destroyed by the Tibetans. The lamasery is a complete ruin and its site is now partly occupied by a fine Yamen built for the Frontier Commissioner but never used. There is another small lamasery known among the Chinese as Ya-pa Ssu – the Temple of the Dumb – which houses a few lamas and a reincarnation.

88. Batang is the headquarters of Lieutenant-General Liu Tsan-ting, commanding the Frontier troops to the southward of Draya.

89. Shortly after his arrival the new Frontier Commissioner despatched two officials, one to Ch'amdo, the other to Batang, with orders to report on the condition of affairs. The former I did not meet but the latter was at Batang when I arrived. He has been endeavouring to persuade General Liu to carry out the Commissioner's orders such as the removal of officers, the dismissal of superannuated soldiers, etc, but had met with a refusal to do anything till arrears of pay had been forwarded. When I saw the Inspector he had given up hope of being able to do anything and had tendered his resignation. He has since been made Pa-an Magistrate. The temper of the troops at Batang is undoubtedly restive but the General has managed to keep them in order up to the present.

90. The south road to Tachienlu was seriously disturbed by brigands so I decided to return by the North Road. I left Batang on February 28th and ascended the valley of the Ba Ch'u or Batang river. This district is known among the Chinese as Ch'i Ts'un Kou "The Vale of the Seven Villages". It was the inhabitants of this valley that were principally implicated in the murder of the Imperial Amban Feng Ch'uan in 1905 which was the proximate cause of Chao Erh-feng's campaigns. They were ruthlessly punished but now there are few signs of devastation and valleys are well peopled and cultivated.

91. The road to Paiyü follows a series of valleys running on the whole north and north-west parallel with the Chinsha Chiang. Two passes below 14,000 feet above sea

level are crossed. Except in the lower parts near Batang the country is densely wooded with conifers and prickly oak. Eleven miles from Paiyü we crossed the Ngu Ch'u, 22 yards broad and then followed it down to the town.

92. Pelyul (Paiyü) is the seat of the magistrate of Paiyü a district cut out of Dege. It consists of a large lamasery built in irregular tiers on a rocky pinnacle or spur over-looking a cultivated patch of ground about a third of a mile broad sloping down to the river. Adjacent to the lamasery is the residence of the former official of the King of Dege which is now occupied by the magistrate. On the agricultural land below are three small villages. The lamasery has between three and four hundred lamas and belongs to the Nyimapa sect. Except for the usual wool, musk and medicine business there is no trade. Two or three silver and brass smiths live in the lamasery.

93. The main road to Gönch'en and Kantzu ascends directly from Paiyü to a very steep and arduous pass and then descends to Gat'o Gönpa another large Nyimapa lamasery. We, however, took what was said to be an easier and shorter road along the Chinsha Chiang. Leaving Paiyü on the 6th March we descended the Ngu Ch'u four miles from its junction with the Chinsha. This we crossed in skin coracles and then ascended the opposite bank to a height of 2,000 feet. The river here flows through deep defiles shut in by steep mountains. After flowing generally south-east from Kangt'o below Gönch'en the river makes a bend near Hop'o and turns south-west for a dozen miles to the junction of the Ngu Ch'u. There it makes another turn to the west-north-west. This angle in the river's course is not shown on maps.

94. The next day and a half we skirted the bend of the river at a high elevation passing several villages and much cultivation and then finally descended and crossed it rejoining the main road. Thence we ascended the left bank for 20 miles to Kangt'o and the next day, the 9th March, reached Gönch'en.

95. From Gönch'en I took the main road back to Kantzu. There is one high pass, the Tr'o La or Ch'iu-erh Shan, which is much feared by Chinese on account of ice and snow. It is not, however, exceptionally bad. We rejoined the Dzogch'en road and Yilung and thence returned without incident to Tachienlu.

Tachienlu;
May 19th, 1917.

O. R. COALES.

Notes

- 1 Perhaps, rather, because in the first invasion of Tibet in the 18th century the bridges were guarded by Szechuanese and Yunnanese soldiers respectively. Both reasons are given.
- 2 Bugön "Daughter Monastery", to distinguish it from Yengmdo "mother monastery".

Miscellaneous notes on the districts visited

The Horpa States

The five Horpa States occupy the tract of country between Dau and Rongpats'a and are called Hor K'angsar (Huo-erh K'ung-sa), Hor Mazur (Huo-Mashu), Hor

Beri (Huo-erh Pai-li), Hor Drio (Huo-erh Chu-wo), and Hor Drango (Huo-erh Changku). The Chinese add two more Hor Tongkor (Huo-erh Tung-k'o) which is north of Drio and Huo-erh Tsa which is untraceable but was probably on the upper Yalung. Neither are included by Tibetan in the Horpa States. Rockhill (Land of the Lamas) says the Horpa States are also called Nyarong. This is, however, the Tibetan name of Chantui.

The states lie along the valleys of the Yalung or Tsa Ch'u and its tributary the She Ch'u and are bounded on the south and south-west by the Kawalori range and the waterparting of the Yalung and She Ch'u rivers, dividing them from Chantui. (Rockhill is wrong when he calls the She Ch'u the Nya Ch'u. The latter is the name of the Yalung when it passes through Nyarong or Chantui. In the Horpa states it is known as the Tsa Ch'u. The name She Ch'u is used from Dau to Drio.) On the west they touch Dege at Rongpats'a and on the south-east Chala and Keshitsa at Dau. The northern boundary is undefined.

The division of the country is rather intricate owing to the fact that the authority of the chiefs was exercised rather over families and villages than over districts. Thus Rongpats'a was divided between Drio and Dege, and Dau between Drango, Mazur, Chala and Keshita. The annexed sketch map will give some idea of the divisions through it is impossible to give all details.

The surface of the country in the east comprises the long and narrow, but generally cultivated, valley of the She Ch'u which opens out to a plain at Dau. To the west is the open valley of the Yalung about 25 miles long extending from near Drio to Rongpats'a. In some parts it is more than two miles broad and is everywhere cultivated both in the plain and on the lower slopes. On the north are low grass clad mountains and open valleys affording some of the best pasture in the Marches. To the south of the Yalung rise the steep flanks of the snowclad Kawalori range. The latter is of granite formation while the country to the north and east is limestone and sandstone covered in many places with a thick layer of loess like earth.

The population of the Horpa States is denser than anywhere else in the Marches. Naturally it is the agricultural district which is most populous as, for example, the Yalung valley where in an area of about 45 miles I estimate a population of 1,000 families excluding the lamaseries. This would make a density of over 130 persons to a square mile, and including lamaseries over 170. Though the area appears insignificant there is no other tract of agricultural land in the Marches remotely approaching it in size.

The Horpa States have been divided by the Chinese into the two magistracies of Kantzu and Luho and a portion is included in Taofu. The population of these three is over 10,000 families.

According to Tibetan custom the natives prefer to live in small villages and there are no towns of any importance except Kantzu and Dau. Drango, Beri and Rongpats'a are villages of 20 to 30 houses. Kantzu and Dau I have described elsewhere.

There is a gradual infiltration of Chinese settlers into the Dau and Drango districts where in the low-lying parts of the valley of the She Ch'u land neglected by Tibetans is being brought under cultivation. Dau is a semi-Chinese town and below Drango a purely Chinese colony has sprung up the greater part of which is Christian. Beyond Drango there are a few Chinese on the soil but at Kantzu there are two or three score

of petty traders and men who have attached themselves to Tibetan families through their wives. The latter is a very common practice.

Occupations. – The people of the Horpa States are engaged in agriculture, cattle-raising, and trade, but the industrial arts are not practiced to any large extent. A small quantity of coarse woollen cloth and braid is produced by home labour. Flour mills at Kantzu, as Rockhill notes, are monopolised by Chinese. Carpentry, at any rate the better quality for building and furniture, is also in the hands of Chinese who come in with the spring from Jungching near Yanchou every year and go out with the autumn.

The fertile Yalung and She Ch'u valleys produce wheat, barley, peas and beans, and turnips and now-a-days some potatoes. Except at Dau the climate is too cold for maize. The usual wild products, musk, medicines, deerhorns, etc., as well as wool and hides are brought down to Kantzu for sale. A harvest of ten times the sowing is reckoned a good crop of wheat.

The grass country north of Yalung is a breeding ground for myriads of ponies, mule, yak and dzo. The Kantzu ponies and mules are the best in the Marches.

It is in trade, however, that the Horpa people excel. More than any other people in the Marches they are engaged in the Lhasa tea trade and profits reaped are very large. Both lamaseries and lay people invest their capital in the business and the wealth they are able to accumulate is evidenced by the general well-being of the country. As an example of this it may be mentioned that the Kantzu lamasery has recently added a new gilded roof to the principal temple at the cost of thirty or forty thousand taels. In the winter and spring teams of mules and ponies numbering several hundreds are to be met on the road daily either coming from or going to Tachienlu and they almost always belong to Kantzu or Rongpats'a.

With the exception of Nyara Gönpa near Beri the lamaseries of the Horpa States appear to belong entirely to the Gelugpa sect. The principal are Nying-Ch'ung at Dau (400 lamas formerly over 1,000); this lamasery was partially destroyed after the revolt in 1912 in which a French priest was maltreated; Drango, 1,000 lamas; Joro near Drio, 250 lamas; Karanze, 1,300 lamas; Beri, 1,000 lamas; Dargye, 450 lamas, all Gelugpa and Nyara, 100 lamas, Sasya sect. Except Dau these are all very wealthy and superior in appearance to all others of their size in the Marches. Owing to their great influence the Chinese magistrates have to be very careful in their relations with them.

Recent History. – In 1895 in consequence of incessant complaints against the oppression of the Lhasa Debas of Chantui the Governor-General of Szechuan sent General Chang Chi with a Chinese army to reduce the country. Entering Chantui from the Horpa States he was, with the assistance of the natives, soon able to drive out the Lamas and thence advanced and occupied Dege. However the intrigues of the Lhasa Government and the Imperial Ambans resulted in the reversal of his acts and Chantui was restored to Tibet. In the Horpa States, however, the family of Drango had died out and the Chinese put an official in charge of the district and attempted to establish a military colony called Lu-ho Tun. This, however, was a failure. For the next twelve years the Horpa country continued to be harassed by incursions from Chantui.

In 1908 Chao Erh-feng had repressed the troubles in Batang and Litang and had already projected his idea of introducing Chinese civil government into the Marches.

The troubles in Chantui and Dege afforded him the necessary excuse. In the autumn of the year he advanced to Dege with an army and the occupation of that country and Chantui followed. With them the Horpa States were reduced. Subsequently Chinese magistrates were appointed to reside at Kantzu, Taofu and Luho (Drango).

The rebellions of 1912 and 1913 did not spread to the Horpa States except at Taofu, the presence of a Chinese force at Kantzu at the time of the revolution having checked the first movement.

Of the five chieftaincies representatives still reside at Beri, Kantzu and Drio. The descendant of the Mazur chief lives at a village near Dau. The Drango family is extinct.

Dege

The old kingdom of Dege was bordered on the north by Koko Nor, on the east by the Horpa States, Chantui and Litang, on the south by Batang, Sanai, Gonjo and Draya and on the west by Lhato and Ch'amdo. It included two or three old chieftaincies between Dzogch'en to Kantzu which may be called the Kawalori mountains from a conspicuous peak at Kantzu. On either side of the range the subsoil is limestone. The district to the north-east of the range consists of low grass clad mountains and open valleys too high for cultivation but affording fine pasture. On the south-west owing to the proximity of the trough of the Chinsha the limestone has been cut into deep ravines in some places forming chasms a thousand feet deep. All this country is densely wooded. Southwards towards Paiyü the rocks are generally grey sandstones. West of the Yangtse limestone is predominant to beyond T'ungp'u, but further on sandstones take its place and limestone only occurs as perpendicular bluffs forming the summits of ranges, finally disappearing under the red sandstones of Ch'amdo. Beyond T'ungp'u the country again becomes very open and pastoral.

The population of Dege is very scattered and even in the agricultural districts hamlets of more than four houses are scarcely ever seen. There are no large centres, Gönch'en the seat of the King is merely a lamasery and palace with not half a dozen lay houses. Dzogch'en has a score or so of small huts. T'ungp'u counts thirteen farmhouses while Paiyü has less than a dozen. In the 60 miles from above Gönchen to T'ungp'u not more than 160 houses were seen.

Agriculture is carried on in the valleys, generally on the alluvial cones of ravines, and produces wheat, barley, turnips and peas. The sunny slopes 2,000 feet above the Chinsha river and elsewhere on the mountains are also cultivated but only barley, buckwheat and turnips can be harvested. Irrigation is not much used as the climate appears to be sufficiently damp to make it unnecessary. The largest tract of agricultural land is near Tengk'o.

The total population ruled by the King of Dege was between 12,000 and 15,000 families. The country has now been divided by the Chinese into the five magistracies of Teko (Gönch'en) in the centre, Tengk'o in the north-west, Shih-ch'ü (Tsach'uk'a) in the north-east, Paiyü (Pelyul) in the south-east and T'ungp'u in the south-west. The latter includes the chieftaincy of Lhato.

There are very few Chinese in the district and those are chiefly Shensi merchants, miners and men who have joined Tibetan families.

Industries. – Dege is well-known for its brass copper and silver ware. The brass ware is principally articles for use in the lamaseries. It is considered inferior to what was produced at Ch'amdo where the workmen were specially skilled in gilding. The chief article of copper ware is the Dege teapot which is in use all over the Marches. The silver ware of Dege is made by natives and not as at Ch'amdo by Chinese. Besides head ornaments the silversmiths make decorated leather flint cases, purses and penholders which are highly prized by Tibetans. Gold and silver inlay work on iron is also done. The iron scabbards fretted and inlayed often seen in the Marches come from Dege.

The artisans live in various parts of the country but the reputed centres of silver and brass industries are Hop'o and Gat'o Lamasery to the south of Gönch'en. The gross output cannot be very great. A coppersmith at Paiyü told me that when he did not use old copper he obtained his material from Kungk'aling in the south-east of Litang. This is curious as the disused mine at T'ungp'u shows that there is copper in the country. White metal used for decorating teapots and for prayer-wheels and ornaments comes, I believe, from China. Teapots are either cast or beaten. The ornamental work on them is usually roughly cast and afterwards tooled. The fire-proof crucibles used are made of a kind of steatite or postpone mixed with clay.

I did not hear of any mines except the abandoned coppermine near Wara Gönpa in T'ungp'u. A little gold washing is done above Gönch'en.

There is little trade in Dege except in musk, wool, etc. The Lhasa tea trade passes through the north of the country on its way to Jyekundo and the nomads supply transport for it. Ch'amdo and Draya obtain their tea through Dege and the royal family took a large share in the trade till the fratricidal feud ruined them. The Shensi merchants as elsewhere collect the local output of musk, etc., and bring up Chinese goods in exchange for it.

Recent history. – The King of Dege received a seal from the Emperor in the 11th year of Yungchen (1733) appointing him Hsuan Wei Ssu, the highest rank of native chief. Subsequently the north road to Tibet was abandoned by the Chinese officials and the chief became to all intents and purposes independent, though he continued to pay tribute. During the middle of the last century the county of Dege suffered severely from the inroads of the Debas of Chantui, Punropa and others and finally in 1895 General Chang Chi was sent with a force to repress them. He advanced to Gönch'en and after much fighting occupied it and captured the family of the King. He, his wife and two sons were sent to Chengtu. Chang Chi's victories were nullified, however, by the intrigues of the Lhasa Government and the Ambans; the Chinese withdrew from Chantui and Dege and the royal family were restored. In the meanwhile the king had died. He left two sons named Doje Senkel and Djembel Rinch'en. The former was legitimate but the latter was alleged to be a progeny of an amour of the queen's. In restoring the kingdom the Chinese had forced the latter to become a lama but soon afterwards with the support of the Chantui Debas he laid claim to the throne. He succeeded for a time in driving out the rightful king but the contest continued with varying fortune until 1908. In the autumn of that year Chao Erh-feng advancing by the north road to impose Chinese supremacy was appealed to by the rightful king. In a short time the pretender was driven out, first to Tsach'uk'a, and thence into Tibet where he has since remained under the protection of the Dalai Lama. The King then offered to surrender his territory to China and was promised in

exchange an allowance of Tls. 3,000 a year and a button of the 2nd rank. The button he did not get on account of the revolution but he still draws his allowance from the taxes.

There were no serious disturbances in Dege after the revolution.

Lamaseries. – The principal lamaseries of Dege are Hlun-drub-ten at Gönch'en, 500 Lamas, of the Saskya sect, Dzogch'en, 1,000 lamas, Pelyul, 4–500 lamas, Gat'og, 4–500 lamas, all Nyimapa sects. There are hardly any lamaseries of the Gelugpa sect. The smaller lamaseries belong for the most part to the Saskya sect.

Lhato

Lhato (Chinese, Shang Nato) was a small chieftaincy lying between Dege and Ch'amdo. On the north it extended to Koko Nor. It is now included in the district of T'ungp'u.

It is almost entirely elevated open grass country. Except at one or two places where a little barley is grown the population is nomadic. The chief's seat is one day's distance north of the Gönch'en-Ch'amdo road near Chorzhung. The population is said to number 500 families.

In the re-organisation of the Marches the chief was forced to give up the seal which had been granted in the eighteenth century. In compensation for his loss of authority he was given an allowance of a thousand rupees (or taels) a year which he still draws.

Ch'amdo

The country ruled by the Reincarnations of the Ch'amdo Lamasery comprised several detached places of territory. The largest tract was that in which the town of Ch'amdo is situated. The boundaries of this were on the north [of] the country of the Lung-chin'ing chief (Nanchen Gyalpo) of Koko-Nor, on the east Lhato and Dege, on the south Draya, on the west Pasu and Riwoch'e. Other districts were Pienpa, Chagra, where the second Reincarnation was supposed to reside, Ondu Gönpa and Chötr'i (Chos-k'ri) on or near the main road to Tibet west of Shobando; a portion of the Ts'awa districts on the Salween below Chia-yü Ch'iao; Tag-zi Gönpa (Stag-gzig) north of T'ungp'u, and 300 families in the 39 Banner Country north-west of Riwoch'e. The former population was said to be 7,000 families but this is allowed to have been an exaggeration.

The Ch'amdo district consists of the valleys of the Mekong and Om Ch'u rivers and of a small portion of that of the Dzi Ch'u. The Mekong flows at a depth of about 4,500 feet below the crests of the nearest range of mountains which are at a distance of from four to ten miles on either side. The valley itself is about 10,300 feet above sea level and has a very warm climate so that wheat, barley and the usual Tibetan crops are produced and apricots, though of poor quality, can ripen. The river valleys are generally very narrow and cultivation is confined to alluvial cones of ravines where irrigation is possible. The lower slopes of the mountains are very bare and on the upper parts forests are less abundant than in Dege. The rocks are entirely a deep red sandstone and it is only on the extreme east and west that limestone appears as crags thrust through the sandstone. To the east and north-east the country is open grass

country. The country to the west of the Mekong has the appearance of an intricately furrowed mountain range covered at its summit with thick forests. As in Dege the upper slopes of the mountains are cultivated with barley and buck-wheat, the extreme limit being nearly 14,000 feet above sea level. The deep warm valley of the Mekong is no doubt the cause which permits farming at this great altitude. Near Tachienlu the limit of cultivation is below 12,000 feet.

Government. – The Ssuch'uan Topography says "Ch'amdo was formerly subject to the Hutuktus of the Yellow Sect. Subsequently to the conquest of Tibet in the 58th year of K'ang-his the Chief Hutuktu was granted a seal with an inscription in Manchu, Mongol and Tibetan" Shan Chiang Chiao O-erh-te-ni No-men-han (The Erdeni Nomenhan, Expositor of the Yellow Religion). The Chief Reincarnation lives at the Ch'amdo Great Lamasery, the second at Chia-la (Chagra) Lamasery west of Pienpa.

The seal remained in use till the revolution when it was taken away to Tibet.

The Chief Reincarnation was under the suzerainty of the Emperor and sent tribute missions to Peking at regular intervals. Politically he was independent of the Dalai Lama. When a Chief Reincarnation died a selection of suitable births was made at Ch'amdo and the list of candidates was sent to the Imperial Amban at Lhasa with a request that the proper successor might be indicated and the Imperial ratification obtained. The Amban communicated with the Dalai Lama and the two together selected the successor to the principality by lot. The name was reported to Peking by the Amban and in due course a decree appeared authorising the young reincarnation's appointment. No tribute was paid to the Dalai Lama though presents might be sent occasionally. When about 20 years of age the reincarnation was sent to Lhasa to study and received from the Dalai Lama the usual form of ordination. His political status seems to have been very like that of the Prince Bishops of the Holy Roman Empire.

There were altogether five reincarnations. The Chief Minister was called the Ts'ang-drub-pa (possibly Ch'andzopa, or Treasurer; the Chinese is Ch'ang-chu-pa); next to him was an official called the Sher-pön, which seems to mean judge or magistrate. The holder of the last post is now chief Pao-cheng to the Chinese Magistrate and is responsible for much of this information.

Recent History. – The Reincarnations remained in temporal as well as spiritual control of the country up to the time that Chao Erh-feng was made Boundary Commissioner. In 1908 or 1909 Ch'amdo and Draya were removed from the control of the Ambans at Lhasa and placed under that of the Boundary Commissioner. Soon afterwards the reincarnations were deprived of their temporal power but as their seals only mentioned control in religious matters these were not taken away. One half of the produce of the grain taxes was allowed to be retained by the reincarnations for the support of the lamaseries.

At the time of the outbreak of the revolution the country was garrisoned by one battalion of Pien Chün troops numbering about 240 officers and men under the command of the present General P'eng Jih-sheng as battalion commander. He was also temporary civil magistrate of Ch'angtu. Seventy or eighty of the men were stationed in the country seat of the chief reincarnation near O-lo-Ch'iao on the Om Ch'u. The nearest Chinese troops were at Gönch'en and Draya. The garrison had no field or machine guns.

When the rebellion broke out the chief reincarnation was, I understand, in Tibet studying; of the others one was dead and three were in the country; the Ts'angdrupa was also absent. When news of the revolution and of the return of the Dalai came through emissaries from Central Tibet came to the great lamasery and began stirring up trouble. The plan of campaign suggested was that a Tibetan force should advance from Chia-yü Ch'iao on Ch'amdo and on its arrival the lamas should rise and attack the garrison which quartered in the town below seemed an easy prey. Unfortunately for the Tibetan cause the lamas spoiled the plan by attacking before the Tibetan force arrived.

The Chinese though warned had taken no precautions against a rising. The grain collected by the officials remained stored as previously in the lamasery. One day in June 1912 a party of 70 soldiers, of whom only two were armed were sent up to the lamasery to bring down grain for current requirements. On arrival at the lamasery entrance they were suddenly attacked by the lamas, those who had got in were killed and most of the others who escaped were wounded. The same afternoon or evening in the space of an hour a stone barricade was raised all round the lamasery. When the matter was reported the Commandant at once sent off for the 70 men at Olo Ch'iao, who after burning the country house were able to reach Ch'amdo the same evening. P'eng had now under 200 men capable of bearing arms, besides the civilians, and was cooped up in an untenable position absolutely at the mercy of the lamasery. It was vitally necessary to capture the lamasery.

A few days later, therefore, during the night he despatched some 30 men along the bank of the Mekong under the lamasery with orders to attack and set it on fire from the further side. There were probably at this time over 2,000 lamas there. He was himself to make a feigned frontal attack from the town. The night was moonlight but fortunately for the attackers the moon clouded over as they were advancing. The plan completely succeeded; the small party reached some outbuildings of the lamasery and set them on fire and in the resulting confusion forced their way in shooting indiscriminately. The lamas surprised and thinking they were attacked by reinforcements made little resistance. The Chinese continued to fire the buildings and finally the whole lamasery was burned down and all the lamas driven out. About 150 lamas are said to have been killed. Nothing was saved from the flames except what was subsequently dug out of the ruins. The Chinese were for once too busy to loot.

Having gained the lamasery P'eng was able to organise a defence, but the Tibetan troops now came up and he was closely besieged. They were, however, too afraid to attempt an assault and settled down to beleaguer the garrison till it was starved out. The Chinese were short of provisions owing to the destruction of the grain in the lamasery and their position exposed to fire from rifles and muzzle-loading guns from the surrounding mountains was uncomfortable but they managed to hold out for nearly three months until a battalion of 240 men forced its way through from Dege.

With this reinforcement P'eng was able to take up the offensive. He attacked and drove away the besieging force and then chased them up to Leiwuch'i and Chia-yü Ch'iao. Further advance was impossible owing to the smallness of his army. The Tibetans who were captured during the siege were shot but there was no hunt for rebels after the town had been relieved. Since then there have been no further disturbances in the district.

Industries, etc. – Though Ch'amdo was noted throughout eastern Tibet for its great lamasery the country as a whole was not more prosperous than other districts and certainly less wealthy than the Horpa States. The lamasery absorbed all the activities of the people so that no other lamaseries of note are to be found. The principal industries besides agriculture were weaving and manufactures in gold, silver and brass. A woollen cloth known as Ch'amdo La is woven in the district and is much used by the upper classes for clothing, baggage wraps, tsamba bags, etc. It is coloured and usually woven in patterns. The quality is inferior to the cloth from Central Tibet.

The Ch'amdo gold and silverware is made by Chinese artisans, or rather the half-caste descendants of the original workmen. The design of head ornaments, charm boxes and other ornaments is generally Tibetan. Most of the artisans have since the destruction of the monastery been obliged to take to other occupations.

There are now no Tibetan brassworkers in the town of Ch'amdo. The principal centre is at a place or district called Dzapa, a days journey to the northward. All the usual kind of work is done such as the gilded images and sacrificial utensils of lamaseries. Some good gold and silver inlay articles are produced, a special object being the decorated wine pots in iron.

Population. – It was mentioned above that the population formerly governed by the reincarnations was overestimated at 7,000 families. This number included all the outlying districts. In the country around Ch'amdo there were between 3,000 and 4,000. The Tibetans now occupy a large part of the district lying west of the Mekong and in the part under Chinese control at least a third of the population has not returned. The Ch'angtu Magistrate has, therefore, only about 1,800 families to govern.

Riwoch'e

Riwoch'e, locally Riboch'e, and in Chinese Lei-wu-ch'i, is a district situated between Ch'amdo on the east, Lolung-tsung on the west, Lungch'ing (Nanchen Gyalpo) and the 39 banners on the north and Pasu on the south. It includes the lamasery of Riwoch'e and the two post stations of Enta and Waho T'ang on the main road. I am uncertain whether it extended up to the Salween, but Chia-yü Ch'iao belongs to Lo-lung-tsung.

The country is generally elevated and mountainous and except perhaps in the Salween valley produces only barley and turnips.

The population was formerly about 1,000 families but now that most of the country is in Tibetan hands it numbers only 200.

Riwoch'e and Pasu and part of Lo-lung-tsung were included by the Chinese in the magistracy of enta. Only a small portion of the district is now held by the Chinese.

Government and recent history. – The Ssuch'uan Topography says: – “in the 58th year of Kanghsi (1719) during the conquest of Tibet the people submitted and the principal reincarnation was granted a seal in Manchu, Mongol and Tibetan with the inscription Hsieh Li Huang Chiao No-men-han (the nomenhan who assists in managing the Yellow Religion). In the 4th year of Yungchen (1726) when the boundaries were delimited Lei-wu-ch'i was granted by the Emperor to the Dalai Lama.” The reincarnation belongs to one of the “Red” sects, the Kargyu, I believe.

The country is in fact practically independent of both the Emperor and the Dalai Lama and in recent years on account of its poverty did not send tribute missions. The lamasery submitted to Chao Erh-feng and the temporal power was taken away and given to a Chinese magistrate stationed at Enta. Of the three reincarnations the second died in recent years and has not been replaced. The chief and third quarrelled over some question of authority and the latter was driven out. He took refuge in Tibet carrying off the lamasery seal. The chief reincarnation has since then supported the Chinese cause. The lamasery took no part in the rebellion against the Chinese but the country was the scene of continual fighting in the years from 1912 to 1914. The lamasery buildings have not been looted or burnt but are gradually being spoiled by the Chinese soldiers who occupy them.

Gonjo

Gonjo, in Chinese Kung-chueh, was a small district belonging to the Dalai Lama, bounded on the north by Dege, on the east by Sanai, on the south by Markham and on the west by Draya. It contained about 1,500 families, but now numbers only 1,000.

The country was ruled by one Deba subject to the Governor of Markham. It is generally mountainous and is drained by the Ma Ch'u, a tributary of the Chinsha. The residence of the Deba, now the seat of the Kung Hsien Magistrate, was a Dzong or fort and village also called Gonjo on the Ma ch'u. The population is both agricultural and pastoral, the former being more numerous.

No information is given about Gönjo [*sic*] in the Ssuch'uan Topography, though it is mentioned casually. The Deba was expelled by Chao Erh-feng. The country was the scene of fighting in the Draya rebellions of 1912, 1913 and 1914.

Draya

The old territory of Draya was bounded on the north by Ch'amdo and Dege, on the east by Dege and Gonjo, on the south by Markham and on the west by Ts'awa-kang and Ts'a-wa-rong and Pasu in the valley of the Salween. The present western boundary is the River Mekong. The country is administered by the Ch'aya Magistrate.

The country is for the most part occupied by the valleys of the Mekong and of the Me Ch'u and its tributaries. With the exception of some limestone outcrops to the east the rocks are of the same red sandstone as prevails in Ch'amdo. The climate appears to be drier than that of Ch'amdo and the mountains near the Mekong are very barren and dreary in aspect. Forests are, however, common in the higher parts of the country.

Agriculture is carried on in the same manner as in Ch'amdo and the same crops are produced.

The present population of Draya is said to be 4,000 families. It was formerly over 5,000. Of the decrease 800 families are in the districts now occupied by the Tibetans across the Mekong.

The chief places, containing the only lamaseries of great size are Jamdun draya and Yengmdo (Yentai T'ang). These have been described elsewhere.

Recent history. – The political status of Draya in former days was similar to that of Ch'amdo. The chief reincarnation was granted in 1717 a seal with the same inscription. He was assisted in the Government by a Ts'ang-drub-pa (Ch'andozpa or treasurer). Tribute missions were sent to Peking but not to Lhasa. The succession was arranged in the same way as at Ch'amdo.

At the reorganisation of the Marches the temporal power was taken away and a Chinese civil magistrate installed. The lamasery was allowed to retain one half of the grain receipts.

The events after the revolution of 1911 are somewhat obscure. In 1912, the whole population in sympathy with risings elsewhere and aided by Tibetan forces from across the Mekong revolted. The only Chinese forces in the country were about a hundred men stationed at Jamdun and Gonjo. These were hopelessly outnumbered and had to withdraw to Batang with the loss of a score of men. The country remained in the hands of the Tibetans until Ch'amdo had been relieved in the autumn. Chinese forces then advanced from Batang and Ch'amdo and forced the Tibetans to evacuate Jamdun. For the time being the Chinese made no attack on Yentait'ang (Yengmdo).

Later on the Tibetans emboldened by Chinese inactivity insinuated themselves secretly into the lamasery at Jamdun Draya and only made their presence known by firing on the Chinese in the town. The Chinese then attacked the lamasery from both sides and drove out the Tibetans, but instead of following up their victory proceeded to loot and burn the lamasery killing many innocent lamas and Tibetans. Later on, they captured Yangtait'ang and chased the Tibetans across the Mekong and invaded Pasu. Lack of men, however, prevented them from occupying the country and the west of the Mekong was evacuated.

The civil magistrate at Draya had done his best to restore order and appease the natives but the next year, 1913, he was removed to Ch'angtu and a new magistrate installed. This man reversed the policy of his predecessor and by his unwise act goaded the inhabitants into a new rebellion. Tibetan forces once more entered the country, Yengtait'ang was occupied and the garrison of 80 men at Jamdun beleaguered. The Chinese held out for a month and were eventually relieved by a force from Batang.

The fighting went on into 1914, when Yengtait'ang was recovered and the Tibetans at last driven across the Mekong. I believe it was at this time that the lamasery at Yangtait'ang was destroyed in order to remove a centre of intrigue among the Tibetans. The Chinese advanced across the Mekong again but were recalled by orders from Peking to cease hostilities. The old magistrate was recalled when the rebellion broke out and has since governed the country without further disturbances occurring.

Trade and industries. – There are no centres of trade in Draya and little business worth speaking of. The Shenshi merchants do the usual trade in musk, medicines etc., and bring in tea and Chinese goods.

The inhabitants of some of the villages in the Me Ch'u Valley, notably Gyalowa, were engaged in trade between Atuntzu and Jyekundo and in the distribution of goods on the other side of the Mekong. Their activities have been restricted by the devastation of the rebellions and the destruction of the two great lamaseries. Many of

them having been ruined have left the country and settled down at Atuntzu. The principal import from Yunnan is sugar.

Trade with the districts west of the Mekong is precarious and at the caprice of the Tibetan officials. On occasions when traders are allowed to cross the river they are required to pay 1 rupee a load for general goods and 2 rupees for grain and rice brought from Draya. If there happen to be soldiers in a village they visit a squeeze of one rupee for 15 soldiers is demanded.

Agriculture is the only industry of Draya. Cultivated land seems to be more extensive than in Ch'amdo and villages are more numerous. The crops are the same as elsewhere.

The ula system

The ula system was also dealt with in Mr King's despatch No. 14 of January 18th, 1914. Looking at the question from the point of view of the employers the arrangements work on the whole very efficiently. Each magistracy is divided up into several districts for each of which a Paocheng is made responsible. Each Paocheng's district is in turn comprised of several "ts'un" – townships rather than villages as the name applies to places where the population is entirely nomad as well as to settled country – over each of which is a headman. For the supply of ula and personal service it is generally arranged that the townships, or where the general amount required is large, the Paocheng's districts, serve in rotation. When, as often happens, the district or township is some days distant from the ula centre, the probable amount of men and animals required for the recurring period are assembled at the centre and wait there for employment during the prescribed period.

It is probable that the Chinese when reorganising the country left the detailed arrangements of the supply of ula to the native Paochengs and that these have adhered to the customary system prevailing under the native chiefs. All the main roads are divided for the purpose into definite sections and a regulation is in force, but whether it is adhered to I do not know, that ula animals must not be used beyond the section for which they are supplied under penalty of fine. The ula sections are arranged, quite rightly, to suit the convenience of the people rather than that of the traveller. Thus on two or three occasions on my journey ula was changed three times in one day. On other occasions where the population was sparse the same ula animals were used for two or three days. It is obvious that the shorter the journey made the less damage will be done to the animals and the less inconvenience be caused to the people supplying them. The advantage of short sections is still more emphasized by the consideration that the animals are not fed on the journey and only pick up what sustenance they can in the hour or so after the daily stage is finished, which is very little in the short days of winter when the ground has been eaten bare of pasture. On minor roads where there are no regular stages there are nevertheless customary ula sections and disputes as to the supply of animals do not arise if notice is sent beforehand.

When a large number of men and animals are being employed it is the general rule of the Pacheng's to send a "Ch'uan-p'ai" or summons one or two days ahead so that the ula may be ready waiting for the arrival of the traveller. Single travellers and

soldiers have to take what animals they find on the spot and as it often happens that there are none the rule about not exceeding the sections will be broken. If the Ch'uan-pa'i has gone forward it seldom happens that the animals are not ready. On my journey I must have had ula changed about 80 times and in not more than three cases did ula fail me and in less than a dozen was I delayed waiting for it.

The use of ula is nominally restricted to official purposes and generally the public unless they can use influence are not allowed it. Private soldiers and official servants are also not supposed to ride ula animals but this is universally abused. A gross injustice is the common employment of ula by officials and their friends for the transport of private speculations in merchandise by which the higher rates of ordinary carriage are avoided. Any foreigners can obtain ula and it is used both by Protestant and Catholic missionaries though not greatly by the latter. The foreign employer is usually fairminded enough to pay a substantial gratuity over and above the regulation hire.

The official pay for ula is half a rupee a day per animal and one-quarter per man. This is half the lowest price paid by tea merchants for yak and a quarter of the ordinary charges for other travellers. Judging by the experience of oriental habits it is doubtful if the full amount is paid to the owners of the animals. The usual reply to enquiries is – sometimes we get paid, sometimes we don't. Latterly since remittances from Szechuan have been irregular very little cash has been paid out in many districts for ula, but the owners have been given vouchers which will be exchanged for cash when the money comes forward. Under the native chiefs no payment was made for ula but then the amount and frequency of its use were small as compared with the present day.

The general principle on which ula and personal service is levied is that it is a tax on land or cattle. In this way the poorest classes who have neither land nor cattle, escape the burden. In the K'angting or Tachienlu district the following is the scale on which it is levied:–

Landowners sowing 100 tou (about 30 bushells) of seed a year supply each two ponies and two head of cattle; if also cattle owners then an additional head in five.

Landowners sowing 50 tou (about 15 bushells) of seed a year supply one pony and one head of cattle; if also cattle owners then an additional head in five.

Landowners sowing 30 tou (about 8 bushells) supply one-half load, that is to say, two families supply one animal between them.

Landowners sowing 15 tou (about 4½ bushells) supply one man. Cattle owners (nomads) supply one animal in ten, if urgently required one in five.

The burden of ula falls very unevenly both on certain classes and certain districts. Large cattle owners have no difficulty in supplying what is required. The greatest sufferers are the small farmers who have only sufficient cattle and labour for farming purposes. Being unable to supply animals they are often obliged to hire what are required of them from others at a higher price than the official remuneration or else pay a gratuity to avoid the service. People who live near the main roads suffer from unauthorised use of their animals by passing soldiers and are liable to be called on for ula out of their turn. There is much abuse by the Paochengs who remit ula service to persons who are their friends or pay them bribes, a practice which makes the burden heavier on those who are less influential.

The district where the pressure of ula is most severe is the K'angting district through which all the supplies for the rest of the Marches have to pass. Elsewhere much difficulty is experienced in the mountainous country in the valleys of the Yangtse and Mekong where there are no extensive stretches of pastureland; this is specially the case near Gönchen in Dege. The scarcity of animals on the south road is I think to be attributed to the desolation caused by the frequent rebellions and prevalence of brigandage.

The following are some notes taken:—

achienlu. — People have to supply ula four or five times a month. The sections being on average three days, this means 12 to 15 days a month.

Gupa near Drango. — The landlord thought himself lucky not to have to supply ula ten times a month. One to two stages.

K'olondo near Drango. — Ula service crushing. Admitted by magistrate.

Gi near T'ungp'u. — Supply ula and service nearly every day.

Chorzhung halfway to Ch'amdo. — in grass country. Each family supplies ula five or six times a month, four to five animals each. One day's journey.

T'opa near Ch'amdo. — Beri and T'opa supply alternately for 20 and 30 days.

Ch'amdo. — Ula service very severe. Chinese as well as Tibetans have to render personal service.

Shingk'a between Ch'amdo and Yengtait'ang. — Supply for 10 days a month but often a whole month without any.

Gyalowa near Draya. — No cash payments for two years.

Tibetan Frontier Province: Extent of Dalai Lama's religious interest in.

Tachienlu,

[Dated] July 19th 1917.

Sir,

In your despatch to the Foreign Office, No. 165 of June 2nd, on the subject of my proposed journey to Tibet mention is made of the Dalai Lama's anxiety regarding his lamaseries in China.

2. Within the present limits of the Frontier Province the Gelugpa or Yellow sect, of which the Dalai and Penchen [sic] Lamas are the heads, is predominant in Ch'amdo, Draya, Markham, Batang, Litang and the Horpa states. Elsewhere the Red Sects, such as the Nyingmapa and the Sakyapa, are the more numerous. In the Gelugpa district there are generally many small Red sect lamaseries while on the hand in Dege and Nyarong (Chantui) where the Red sects are predominant there are few if any Gelugpa lamaseries.

3. Of the Gelugpa lamaseries that of Gata (T'aining), about sixty miles northwest of Tachienlu containing some 200 lamas, I mentioned in my despatch No 2 of April 13th last. A new Abbot or K'anpo appointed by the Dalai Lama has just taken over charge. This lamasery can be considered to have been a direct appendage of the Dalai Lama. In addition to the seventh Dalai having been imprisoned there a later reincarnation was also found in the district.

List of Lamaseries passed on the road

Name	Orthography	Sect	Number of Lamas.		Remarks
			Now.	Formerly.	
<i>Tachienlu to Dau</i>					
Chen-nang	Schan-nang	Nyimapa	10	...	Near Drungo
Sang-k'a	Sang-k'a	Do.	10	40	At Barmen
Dambarangdro	(?)	Bönpa	10	...	Near Barmen
Kazhich'a	(?)	Gelugpa	100	...	Near Chiehsechu
Nyimts'o	Gnyis-mts'o	Do.	400	1,000	At Dau, so-called because formerly there were lakes on either side. Rockhill's Nin-ch'ung is wrong.
<i>Dau (Taofu) to Karnze</i>					
Drango	Brag-go	Gelugpa	1,000	1,000	At Changku
Ch'okarteng	Ch'os-skar-steng	Do.	60	(?)	At Changku 100 nuns. Seat of Draka Lama.
Keuts'ong	Ke-u-ts'ongs(?)	Do.	(?)	(?)	Small lamasery in Drango Plain.
Joro	Jog-ro	Do.	250	(?)	Near Drio.
Geshi Gön	(?)	Do.	40	(?)	Two small lamaseries
Drapi Gön	(?)	Do.	25	(?)	in Kantzu plain.
Tsesung	Brtse-gsungs	Do.	100(?)	(?)	Near P'uyinang.
Ts'ennyng Ngagpa	Mtsan-snying Ngagpa	Do.	1,300	(?)	Two amalgamated to form Karnze Lamasery.
Draka	Gra-dkaa	Do.	(?)	(?)	Small, near Karnze.
K'angma	K'ang-ma	Do.	(?)	(?)	Ditto.
Nats'o	Sna-ts'o	Do.	(?)	(?)	Ditto.
Burangnats'ang	(?)	Do.	(?)	(?)	Ditto.
<i>Karnze to Gönchen</i>					
Nyara	Nya-rang	Saskya	100	(?)	Near Beri.
Beri	Beri	Gelugpa	100	(?)	Ditto.
Dargye	Dar-rgyas	Do.	450	(?)	Near Lingts'o.
Gesa	(?)	Do.	(?)	(?)	Small near Rongpats'a.
Begi	(?)	Do.	20	(?)	Ditto.
Rip'u	(?)	(?)	(?)	(?)	Ditto.
Yarze	Gyar-ze	Nyimapa	100	(?)	Near Yilung.
Lhagyar	Lha-rgyar	Saskya	100	(?)	Ditto.
Mendra	Me-gra	Saskya	22	(?)	Near K'olondo.
K'olondo	K'o-lo-mdo	Do.	30	(?)	At K'olondo.
Dzogch'en	Sdzogch'en	Nyimapa	1,000	(?)	400 in residence. Chief lamasery of a special sect.
Galing	Dgaa-gling	Saskya	35	(?)	Near K'olondo.
Lhun-drub-ten	Lhun-grub-sten	Do.	300	450	At Gönch'en.

NARRATIVE OF A JOURNEY FROM TACHIENLU TO CH'AMDO

List of Lamaseries passed on the road (*continued*)

Name	Orthography	Sect	Number of Lamas.		Remarks
			Now.	Formerly.	
<i>Gönch'en to Ch'amdo</i>					
Changra	Changra	Saskya	50	(?)	Below Gönch'en.
Dangt'og	Mdang-t'og	Do.	35	(?)	Ditto.
Wara	Wara	Do.	40	(?)	Near T'ungp'u.
Tr'ets'ong	P're-ts'ong	Do.	25	(?)	Near K'arkang.
T'ogdi Ritr'o	T'og-di Ri-kr'o	Gelugpa	...	...	Ruins, near Ch'amdo.
Geten Jampa Ling	Dge-lden Byampa-Gling.	Do.	...	...	Ruins, at Ch'amdo.
<i>Ch'amdo to Riwoch'e</i>					
Ne-t'ang	Gnas-t'ang(?)	Gelugpa	26	(?)	Near Lagong.
Dzonglung	Sdzong-lung(?)	Do.	30	(?)	Near Enta.
Rowoch'e	Ri-bo-ch'e	Kargyu	200	450	At Riwoch'e.
<i>Ch'amdo to Draya</i>					
Shungp'o	(?)	Nyimapa	30	(?)	Near Paotun.
Gönlung	(?)	Do.	13	(?)	Near Shingk'a.
Yengmdo	Dbyeng-mdo	Gelugpa	...	1,000	Ruined, at Yentait'ang, also called Ma-gön.
Ripung	Ri-dpung	Do.	30	(?)	Near Gyalowa.
Jangling	Byang-gling	Do.	30	(?)	Near Rangdrub.
Dzodzo	Mdzo-mdzo	Do.	30	(?)	Near Tsot'ang.
Bika	Bi-ka	Do.	30	(?)	Near Draya.
Shedrub Ch'ok'or	Bshad-bsgrub	Do.	...	800	At Draya, also called Ch'os-k'o Bu-gön.
(Lamasery)	(?)	Do.	25	(?)	At Draya.
Chido	Spyi-sdo	Do.	(?)	(?)	Near Draya, small.
<i>Draya to Batang</i>					
Pedjor	Ped-byor	Gelugpa	30	(?)	Near Rabjor.
Droden	Gro-dren	Do.	9	(?)	At Gonjo.
Rang-gu	(?)	Nyimapa	20	(?)	Near Gonjo.
Ngura	(?)	Do.	30	(?)	Near K'ongsa.
Sidi	(?)	Do.	45	(?)	Near Taragamda.
Gyise	(?)	Do.	50	(?)	Near Uk'agang.
Sumli	(?)	Gelugpa	12	(?)	At Shisonggong.
Batang	...	...	...	...
<i>Batang to Gönch'en</i>					
Dranga	(?)	Nyimapa	70	(?)	Near Maohsi.
Pelyul	Dpal-yul	Do.	350	400	At Paiyü.
Gat'o	(?)	Do.	350	(?)	Near Paiyü.

In the above [. . .] lists I have endeavoured to obtain the most accurate Tibetan orthography by asking people who ought to know such as the Paochengs and head lamas. Tibetan spelling is, however, so uncertain that only the names of the principal places and lamaseries can be depended on.

I have used the term "lama" to include all grades of monks in the lamaseries.

4. As regards Batang the Abbot was, I understand, selected by the Dalai Lama and given a patent of authority. At Litang also the Abbot was formerly selected by the Dalai Lama, but latterly the lamas of the monastery were allowed to select the Abbot themselves and the Dalai Lama merely sent the patent of authority. The other lamaseries of Batang and Litang were subordinate to the two chief lamaseries and received the appointment of their presiding officers from them. Such was the case with Sampiling or Hsianch'eng. It is by no means the rule that the Abbot should be a reincarnation even though there [was] one living in the lamasery.

5. The rich Gelugpa lamaseries of the Horpa states, now the most important in the province, are generally reckoned to be thirteen in number, viz.; Dargye (the oldest foundation), Beri, Karmaze (Kantzu), Tongk'or (North of Drio), Joro (near Drio), Drango, Nyamts'o (Dau), Samdru and four others and Gonsar (these six are in Dzak'o the country north of Rongpatsa and in the Golok country to the Northeast). Gönsar, "New Lamasery", was the latest established. There are numerous smaller lamaseries which are subordinate to the greater foundations.

6. The story runs that the Fifth Dalai Lama (who is seldom omitted from the account of the foundation of any gelugpa lamasery) was told in a dream that a certain learned doctor was ordained as the convertor of the Horpa district. The doctor was accordingly sent to introduce the Gelugpa doctrines and founded the lamasery of Dargye Gönpa. Converts being rapidly made he was able to establish in all thirteen lamaseries of the order and in the last of these he took up his abode, that is, in Gönsar Gönpa. Since then the headship of the Gönsar Lamasery has devolved by succession on the reincarnation of this doctor, the Ch'öje (Ch'os-rjed) Truku [sic], and therefore no appointment by the Dalai Lama is required. As the position is one of great influence it is probable that the reincarnation was one of those selected by the Amban at Lhasa in the presence of the Dalai Lama from the Golden Vase in accordance with the general rule for the divination of the greater reincarnations. This in itself would hardly give the Dalai Lama a claim to authority over the lamasery. The Abbots or presiding officers of the other twelve lamaseries were appointed by the Ch'öje reincarnation without reference to Lhasa.

7. The present ch'öje reincarnation has left the country in order to avoid the discomfort of living under the Chinese administration and now resides at Sera Monastery near Lhasa. It is the intriguing of the Draka Lama at Changku (Drango) (see par. 14 of my report on the journey to Ch'amdo) to usurp his privileges that has been causing so much dissatisfaction amongst the Horpa lamaseries.

8. The Dalai Lama had no control over the Gelugpa lamaseries in the Kingdom of Chala, all comparatively small foundations. Their officers were appointed by their own authority under the influence of the King.

9. Ch'amdo and Draya were dealt with in the above-mentioned Report. In these cases the headship of the lamasery devolved on the Chief Reincarnation and there was question of appointment by the Dalai Lama.

10. Markham was under the temporal control of the Dalai Lama and doubtless the lamaseries were also under his spiritual control.

11. It is of course the rule that all Gelugpa monks (Drapa) shall if possible go and study at Lhasa where they reside at the hostel of their own district attached to one or other of the great monasteries. Not all of them attain the rank of lama for it is as much a question of means as of ability whether they can obtain the necessary instruc-

tion or pass the examinations. Once having left Lhasa with or without degrees they are free from the control of the Lhasa authorities.

12. In Dege and Nyarong (Chantui) nearly all lamaseries belong to the red and Black sects, the former vastly predominating, while throughout the Marches Red lamaseries are common. The Dalai Lama has no spiritual authority over these sects which though really older than the Gelugpa are called heretical. It is probable that some of the great reincarnations were selected by the Ambans at Lhasa, as was actually the case with the red sect lamasery of Riwoch'e, and in that case the Dalai Lama or other prominent Gelugpa officers would no doubt be suborned to influence the result, but the real spiritual heads of the Red Sects are the superiors of the original foundations in Tibet. It is well known that the Sakya Abbot was the *de facto* ruler of Tibet before the Dalai Lamas had commenced to exist, and, I believe, the territory around his monastery always remained independent of the Dalai Lama and subject only to the control of the Ambans.

13. Like their Gelugpa rivals the monks of the red Sects are accustomed to visit Tibet for purposes of study but always go to the head monasteries of their sect and not to Lhasa unless to obtain some favour from the Gelugpa authorities.

14. The head monasteries in Tibet have no control over the Red sect lamaseries in the Marches.

15. Waddell in his "Buddhism of Tibet" states the number of reincarnations in Tibet, including the Marches, Ch'inghai, Mongolia, to be 160 or thereabouts. I think this figure must refer to the reincarnations whose succession was determined at Lhasa and Peking by the Golden Vase and whose names were inscribed in the Golden Book. Actually the number of reincarnations must be well over a thousand. In Dege alone the reputed number is about seventy and this is admitted to be an underestimate. In a very incomplete list of 45 more important monasteries of the Marches I find nearly that number of reincarnations. Very few were determined by means of the Golden Vase at Lhasa or were reported to the Chinese authorities and in the selection of the rest the Dalai Lama had no part whatever. Ordinarily the rebirth is found by the oracular prediction of some local lama of repute when in a state of trance. Corruption is general and a large proportion of reincarnations are members of noble or wealthy families.

16. The multiplication of reincarnations seems to be a development due to motives very similar to those which in the middle ages filled our abbeys and cathedrals with the bodies and relics of saints. A reincarnation is a valuable asset to any lamasery on account of the offerings which his holiness attracts, and it is a great temptation to a poor lamasery to magnify the merits of one of its learned monks in order to justify a search for his reimbodiment. The longer the series of reincarnations the more holy the saint becomes. Lamaseries are not overscrupulous about appropriating saints that belong elsewhere. In a small lamasery near Draya I found a reincarnation who belonged to the country northeast of Tachienlu. He had been on his way to Lhasa to study when at Draya his guide and preceptor had died leaving him stranded. A lama found him and took him to his lamasery where after having studied at Lhasa he will remain. An interesting discussion of this matter of the multiplication of reincarnations will be found on p. 86 et seq. of Grünwedel's *Mythologie du Bouddhisme au Tibet et en Mongolie*, (Paris, E. Leroux), with special reference to Mongolia.

17. On the question whether the Dalai Lama received any revenues from the Lamaseries in Eastern Tibet my informants agree that none were under any obligation

to send money to Lhasa. Reincarnations and high Lamas visiting Lhasa would no doubt bring suitable presents as an act of courtesy and reverence.

The information above given is subject to the reserve that it comes from Tibetan sources and may not be altogether accurate but my chief source is an unusually well informed and intelligent reincarnation now living in Tachienlu.

I have the honour to be,

Sir,

Your most obedient humble servant,

[signed:] O. R. Coales.

Note. I should be grateful if the following corrections could be made in the Orthography of Place names attached to my Report on Ch'amdo –

Kantzu. The Tibetan name should be Karmdze (dkar-mdzes) meaning "White and Beautiful"

Yalung R. The Tibetan name should be Dza Ch'u (rza) and not Tsa Ch'u. Similarly Dza-ch'u-k'a.

Dza-k'o which belongs to the Horpa states lies between Dza-ch'u-k'a, belonging to Dege and Rongpats'a and is also on the Yalung.

Dau. Another rendering of the name of the lamasery is Nyamts'o (Fish Lake), instead of Nyimts'o. Ninchung is in any case wrong.

TRAVELS OF A CONSULAR OFFICER IN EASTERN TIBET

Historical introduction

Sir Eric Teichman

Source: E. Teichman, *Travels of a Consular Officer in Eastern Tibet: Together with a History of the Relations between China, Tibet and India*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1922, pp. 1–8, 47–58. Maps from pp. 5, 47, 59. Footnotes have been renumbered.

Part I

Relations between China and Tibet up to the time of the British expedition to Lhasa in 1904

[. . .] In very early times the fertile lowlands of Western China were frequently invaded by raiding Tibetans, in the same way that the Marches of North China were harried by the Mongols, the Tibetan invaders penetrating on one occasion as far east as Sianfu in Shensi. In the middle of the ninth century a treaty of peace is said to have been concluded between China and Tibet on a footing of equality.

China's position as Suzerain of Tibet appears to date from the early days of the Manchu Dynasty in the latter half of the seventeenth century. Lamaism (Tibetan Buddhism) had by that time already spread over vast areas of High Asia from Ladak to Manchuria, and the early Manchu Emperors, by adopting Lamaism as their State religion and recognising the Dalai Lama of Tibet as its head, secured a hold over Tibet, Mongolia, and the other lamaistic countries of Asia, which lasted until the fall of their Dynasty two and a half centuries later in 1911. It was the Manchu Emperor, rather than the Chinese Government, who was for more than two centuries recognised by the Tibetans as their Suzerain; and up to the last days of the Dynasty the Emperor was represented at Lhasa by a Manchu and not a Chinese.

Early in the eighteenth century Tibet was invaded by the Dzungarian Mongols. The Manchu Emperor thereupon despatched two armies to the assistance of the Tibetans. Advancing by the Tachienlu road from Szechuan and the Sining road from Kansu, the Chinese succeeded in reaching and occupying Lhasa and expelled the Mongols. This was the first of three successful Chinese advances into Tibet, each of which assured the dominion of the Manchu Emperors over the country for a short time afterwards. On this occasion a Manchu Resident and a garrison of Chinese soldiers were left in Lhasa, while communications with China were assured by stationing small detachments of troops along the Lhasa-Chamdo-Batang-Tachienlu road. The boundary

between China and Tibet was demarcated by a pillar, said to have been erected in the year 1727 (4th year of the reign of the Emperor Yung Cheng) on the Bum La (in Chinese Ning-ching Shan) two and a half days south-west of the west of Batang. The country to the west of this point was handed over to the rule of the Dalai Lama under the suzerainty of the Manchu Emperor, while the Tibetan Chiefs of the States and tribes to the east of it were given seals as semi-independent feudatories of China. This arrangement lasted for nearly two centuries, until the Chinese forward movement initiated in 1905 as the result of the British advance on Lhasa in the preceding year. On the following pages is a list of the principal semi-independent Native States and Lama Principalities of Eastern Tibet, under the protection partly of Peking and partly of Lhasa, which were established by the Manchu settlement of 1727, and still existed at the beginning of the present century.

NATIVE STATES OF EAST TIBET

<i>Tibetan name</i>	<i>States under Chinese protection Chinese name</i>	<i>Rank of chief (in Tibetan)</i>
Chala (The most easterly of the States, with its capital at Tachienlu.)	Mingcheng	Jyelbo (King)
De-ge (The largest of the States, in the basin of the Upper Yangtze.)	Teko	Jyelbo
Nangchen (Embraces the headwaters of the Upper Mekong in the Kokonor Territory.)	Lungch'in	Jyelbo
Hlato (A small State between Nangchen and De-ge.)	Nat'o	Jyelbo
Lintsung (A small State on the Upper Yalung.)	Lintsung	Jyelbo
Ba	Batang	Deba (Hereditary Official)
Letang	Litang	Deba
Hor Kangsar	Huoerh K'ung-sa	Bonbo (Hereditary Official)
Hor Beri	Huoerh Paili	Bonbo
Hor Drango	Huoerh Changku	Bonbo
Hor Driwo	Huoerh Chuwo	Bonbo
Hor Mazur	Huoerh Mashu	Bonbo
(The above are the Five Hor States, in Tibetan Horsekanga, situated on the Upper Yalung; together with De-ge they were placed under the protection of Lhasa in 1865.)		
Ge-she	Keshih	Bonbo
Tongkor	Tungk'o	Bonbo
Tzako	Tsak'o	Bonbo
Yuko	Yuk'o	Bonbo
Seta	Set'a	Bonbo
(Small nomad States in the basin of the Upper Yalung.)		
Nyarong (Comprises the valley of the Yalung below Kanze; ceded to Lhasa in 1865.)	Chantui	Bonbo
Sangen (Comprises the valley of the Yangtze above Batang.)	Sangai	Bonbo
Mili or Muli (A lama State on the borders of Yunnan.)	Mili	Lama

NATIVE STATES OF EAST TIBET (*continued*)

Also: The Gyarong States, a number of petty principalities lying just west of the Chengtu plain in Szechuan.

<i>Tibetan name</i>	<i>States under the protection of Lhasa Chinese name</i>	<i>Rank of chief (in Tibetan)</i>
Chamdo	Chamuto	Lama
Draya	Chaya	Lama
Riwoche	Leiwuch'i	Lama
(Lama Principalities in the Mekong basin.)		
Markam	Mangk'ang	Te-ji (Governor)
(A Lhasa province in the Mekong basin below Draya.)		
Gonjo	Kungchueh	Deba
(A dependency of Markam.)		
Jyade	San-shih-chiu-tsu	Bonbo
(The Country of the Thirty-nine Tribes, lying in the basin of the Upper Salween, south of the Kokonor border.)		

Also: Bashü, Tsawarong, Zayül, Bomed, and Gongbo, all Lhasa provinces, in South-eastern Tibet.¹

During the latter part of the eighteenth century Chinese power in Tibet was on the wane until, about 1790, the Nepalese invaded the country and sacked Shigatse. Roused to action the Manchu Emperor Ch'ien Lung despatched an army into Tibet, which defeated and expelled the Nepalese and even pursued them into their own country. At this period the power of the Manchus was at its height, and Chinese armies, under Manchu leadership, were able to march thousands of miles from Peking across the plains and mountains of China and the deserts of Tibet to appear on the frontiers of Hindustan.

This was the second of the three Chinese advances into Tibet, and again the Manchus decided to consolidate their position and strengthen their hold over the country. By Imperial Decrees of 1793 two Ambans were appointed, given equal rank with the Dalai and Panshen Lamas, and made responsible for the superintendence of the administration of the country. The Dalai Lama was placed to some extent in the hands of the Ambans by a law providing that he could only communicate with the Throne by means of memorials forwarded through the Ambans.

After the death of the great Ch'ien Lung there followed the weak reigns of the Emperors Chia Ch'ing, Tao Kuang, Hsien Feng, T'ung Chih, and Kuang Hsü, and again Chinese power in Tibet waned to the point of extinction.

In 1860 the Tibetans of Nyarong,² under the leadership of an ambitious and warlike Chief named Gombu Nyamjyel, invaded and conquered the neighbouring States, including De-ge, and the Five Principalities of Hor. The whole of Eastern Tibet was upset by these disturbances, and all traffic between China and Tibet along the main South Road ceased for some years.

The Chiefs and peoples of De-ge and of the Hor States appealed to both the Chinese and Tibetan Governments for assistance against the Nyarong invaders. The former, pre-occupied with the T'ai-p'ing rebellion and their troubles with foreign countries, were unable to take any action towards restoring order in the Tibetan

States under their nominal protection; but the Dalai Lama responded to the appeals of the Chiefs by sending a Tibetan army into Kam in 1863 under the Kalon Pulung, by whom the disturbances were suppressed, Gombu Nyamjyel and his family being burned alive in their castle in Nyarong resisting to the last. The administration of Nyarong was then formally taken over by the Lhasa Government, by whom a High Commissioner named Punrab (known in Tibetan as the *Nyarong Chichyab*) was appointed to govern the country, and also to superintend the affairs of De-ge and the Five Hor States, which had been freed from the Nyarong invaders and restored to independence under the rule of their own native Rajahs.

The Tibetan claim to Nyarong, and to a lesser extent to De-ge and the Hor States, dated from this time (1865). Nyarong appears to have been annexed by the Dalai Lama with the approval of the Manchu Throne. It is said that the Tibetan Government offered at the time to give up the country to the Chinese in return for a sum of money as indemnity for the cost of their military operations. But the Peking Government were apparently unwilling to accept the responsibility of administering the State and formally handed it over to the rule of the Dalai Lama, in whose hands it remained until forcibly annexed by the Chinese under Chao Erh-feng in 1911.

In 1875 the twelfth Dalai Lama died, and was reincarnated in the present Pontiff, the thirteenth of the long line of Priest Rulers of Tibet.

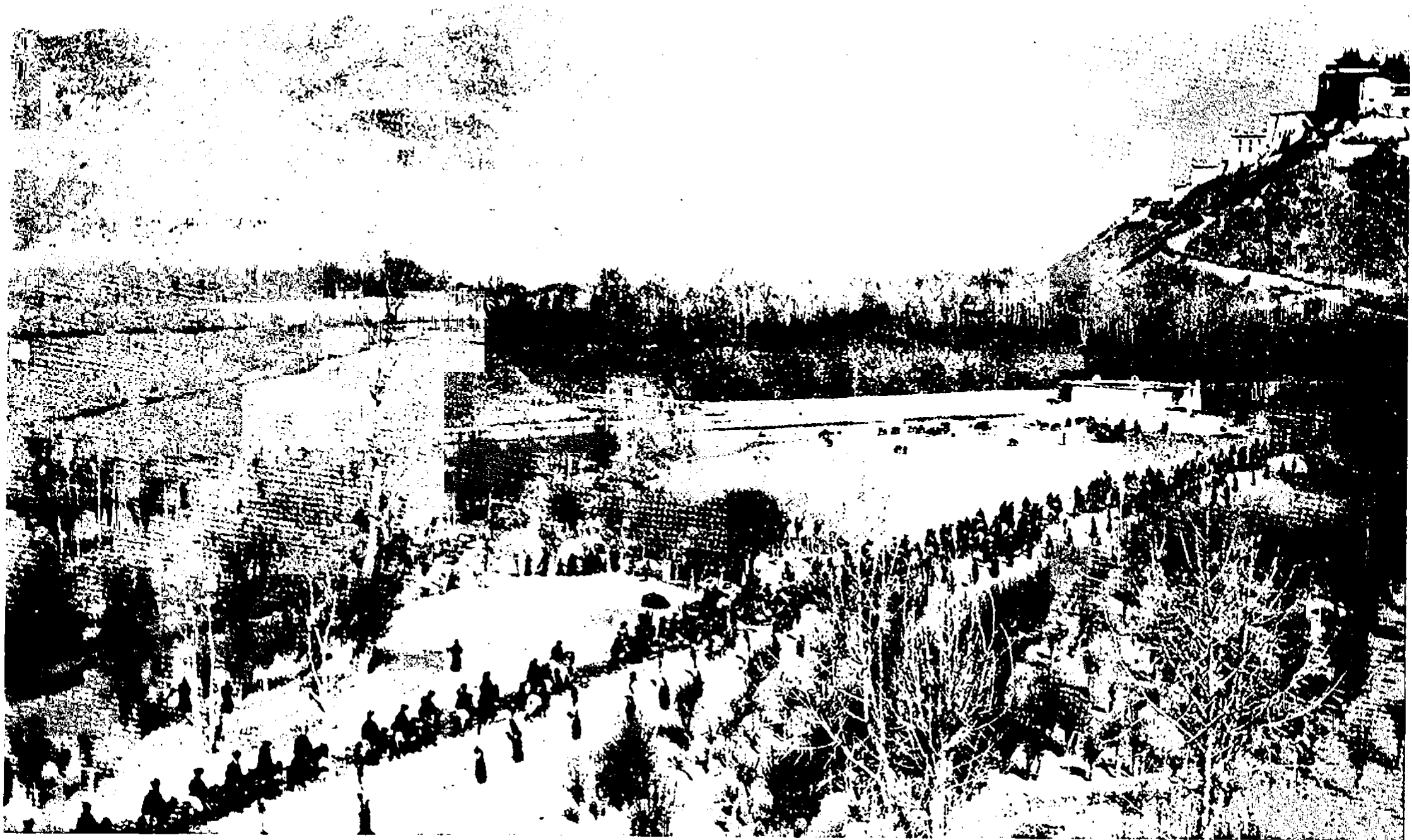
In 1886, the Tibetans raided the Sikkim frontier, and were expelled a year or two later by a small British expedition. As a result of these events the Sikkim Convention was concluded in 1890 between Great Britain and China, and a set of Trade Regulations for the control of commercial relations between India and Tibet was signed three years later. No Tibetan representative took part in the negotiations for the Sikkim Convention, Great Britain dealing with China as the master of Tibet. These events brought Great Britain for the first time on the scene of Sino-Tibetan relations.

In 1894 the Tibetans of Nyarong rose again and invaded the State of Chala. China being then internally at peace, the Viceroy of Szechuan, Lu Ch'uan-lin, despatched a Chinese force which occupied Nyarong and suppressed the disorders. Viceroy Lu thereupon proposed, in a Memorial to the Throne, to take over the administration of Nyarong with Chinese officials. In this he was, however, opposed by the Manchu Amban at Lhasa and the Manchu Commander-in-Chief at Chengtu, while the Dalai Lama also sent representatives to Peking *via* India and the sea route protesting against any Chinese annexation of Tibetan territory. As a result of these representations Viceroy Lu's Memorial proposing the change was rejected by the Throne, and the Tibetan Governor was reinstated in Nyarong.

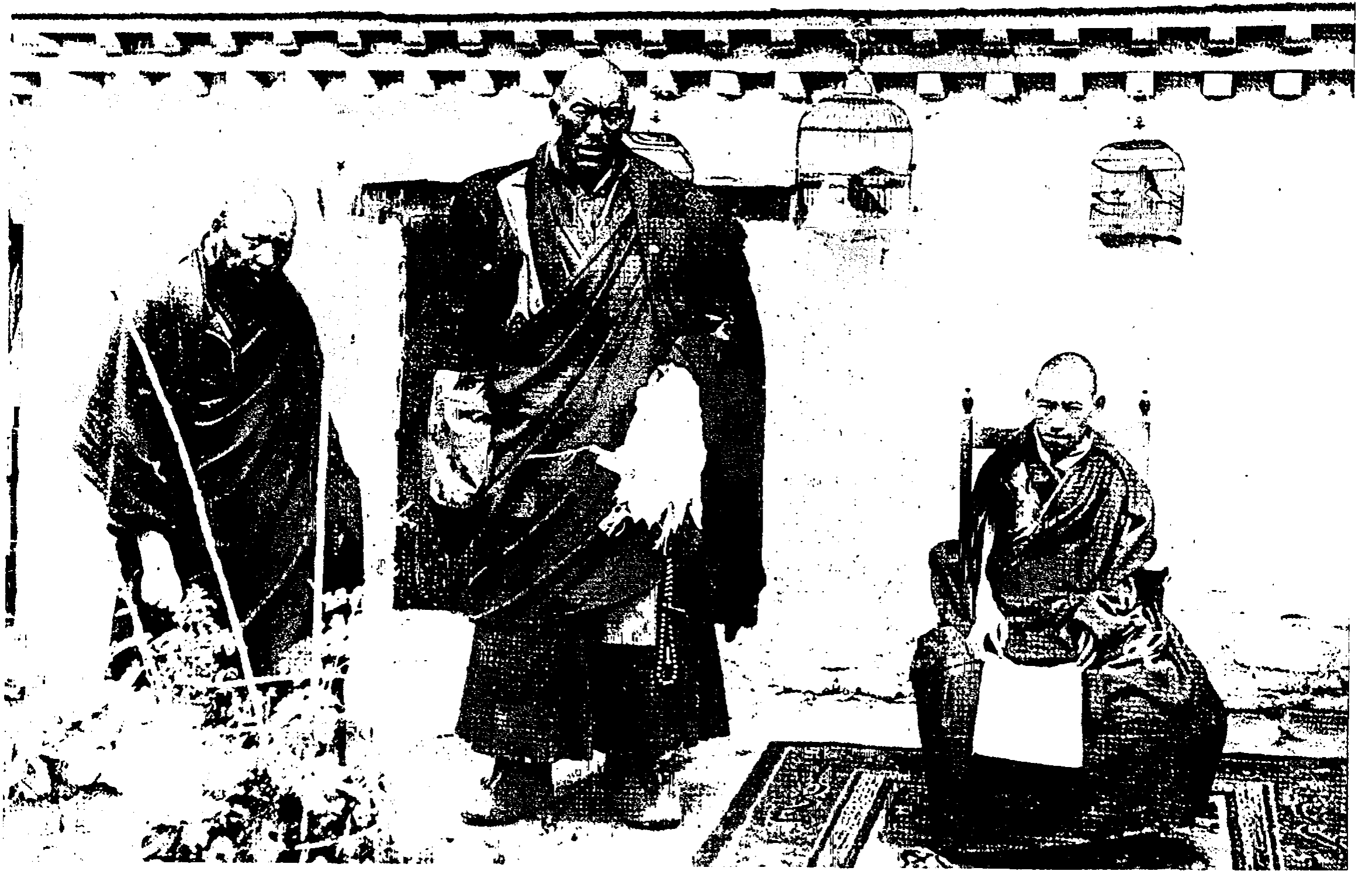
From Nyarong Viceroy Lu's Chinese force penetrated into De-ge, where domestic trouble had broken out in connection with the family affairs of the native Rajah, whose second son, popularly supposed to be the offspring of an influential headman and the Chief's wife, had been placed at the head of a faction opposed to the Chief and his elder son. The Chinese commander played a trick on the De-ge Rajah and secured control of the State by a ruse similar to that employed by Chao Erh-feng some fourteen years later. He promised the Chief his assistance in expelling the faction of the younger son, and then, having been permitted to march his troops into the country and occupy De-ge Gönchen, the capital, he seized the Chief and his family and despatched them to Chengtu in Szechuan, where the lowland climate soon proved fatal to the old Tibetan Chief and his wife. Viceroy Lu then memorialised the Throne



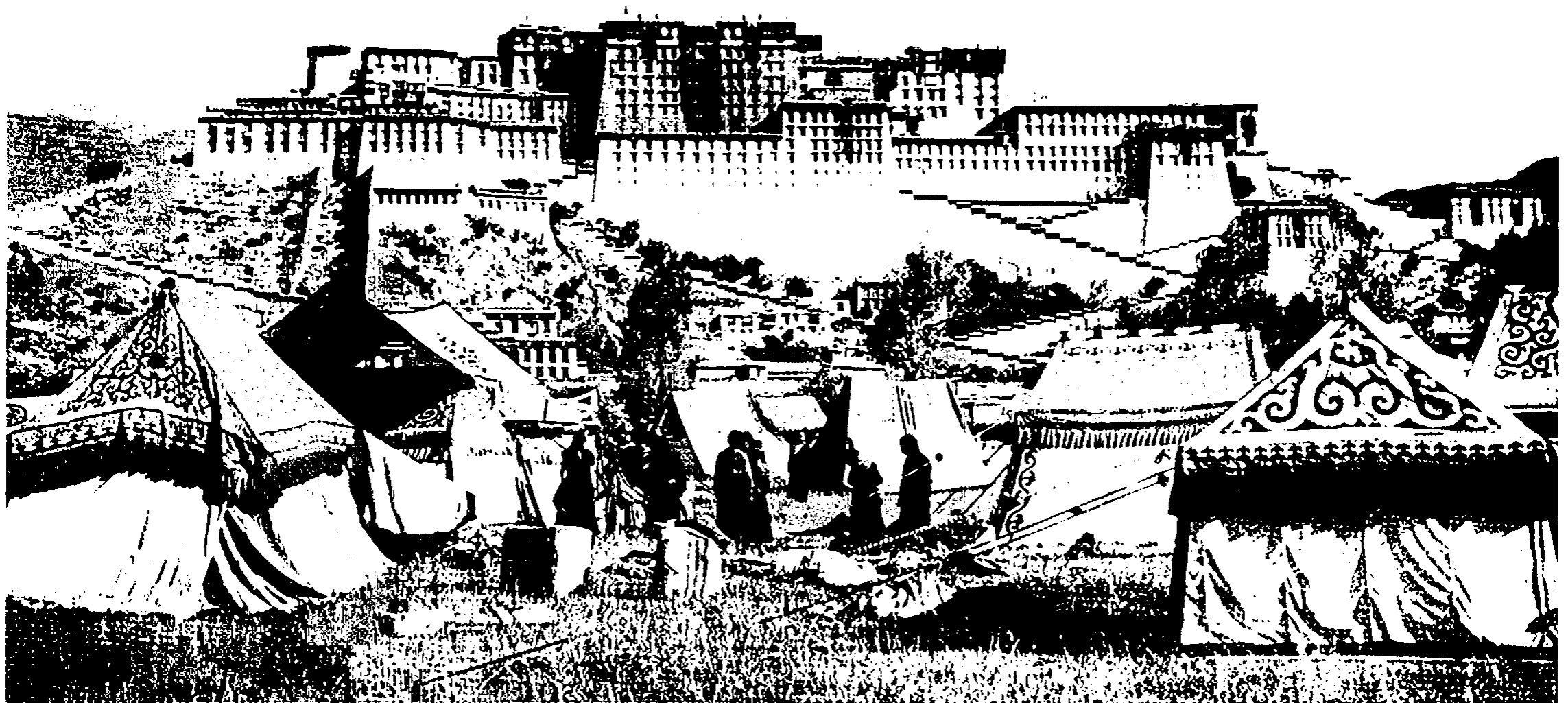
1 The 13th Dalai Lama, 1921.
Oriental and India Office Collection, Bell Collection.



2 The 13th Dalai Lama's state entry into the Potala palace, 1921.
Oriental and India Office Collection, Bell Collection.



3 The Reting Regent, with Kham-pa bodyguard, attendant and caged birds.
Oriental and India Office Collection, 1936-7 Lhasa Mission Collection.



4 The Reting Regent's tents in front of the Potala.
Oriental and India Office Collection, 1936-7 Lhasa Mission Collection.



5 The 6th Panchen Lama, at the Nathu La en route to India in 1906.
Oriental and India Office Collection, Bailey Collection.





6 Tsarong Shapé broadcasting, c.1936.

Oriental and India Office Collection, 1936-7 Lhasa Mission Collection.





7 The abbots of Sera monastery, c.1936.
Oriental and India Office Collection, 1936-7 Lhasa Mission Collection.



8 Visiting officials: the Head of Lapchak mission from Ladakh.
Pitt-Rivers Museum, Bell collection.

with a proposal to take over the administration of De-ge as in the case of Nyarong. Owing to the objections of the Amban and the Dalai Lama as above related, the Emperor refused to agree, and the two sons were sent back from Chengtu to De-ge Gönchen, where the elder was installed as Raja.

In 1900, or thereabouts, the elder brother of De-ge, named Dorje Senge, went to Lhasa and was confirmed in his rank as Rajah, or King, by the Dalai Lama. During his absence, however, the faction of the younger brother, named Ngawang Champe Rincha, which consisted mostly of powerful lamas, made an attempt to install the latter as Chief. The dispute was eventually settled by the intervention of the Tibetan Governor of Nyarong, acting in his capacity of representative of the Dalai Lama and superintendent of De-ge affairs.

In spite of this settlement the younger brother and his lama supporters raised another rebellion a few years later, and the elder was forced to withdraw for a time to Lhasa. In 1906 he returned with troops provided by the Lhasa Government, recovered his throne, and captured and imprisoned the Pretender. The latter, however, escaped, and with the assistance of the northern nomads, who throughout espoused his cause, started yet another rebellion. It was at this juncture (in 1908) that Chao Erh-feng appeared upon the scene, and expelled both the Chief and his brother [. . .].³

At the beginning of the present century, before the British expedition to Lhasa in 1904 and the subsequent Chinese forward movement in Kam, that portion of High Asia inhabited by Tibetan-speaking peoples, and labelled *Tibet* on European maps, consisted of three separate entities, firstly, the Lama Kingdom of Tibet with its provinces and dependencies, secondly, the semi-independent Native States of Kam under Chinese protection, and thirdly, the Kokonor Territory under the control of the Chinese Amban residing at Sining in Kansu.

The Kingdom of Tibet, ruled by the Dalai Lama from Lhasa with the nominal assistance of the Chinese Amban, and commonly known as the *Deba Shung*, extended north to the Dang La range separating it from the Kokonor, and east to the Bum La, the frontier pass near Batang. It included the frontier provinces of Markam and Gonjo, and the lama-ruled dependencies of Draya, Chamdo, and Riwoche, and also the outlying province of Nyarong (Chinese Chantui), situated amongst the Native States under Chinese protection. This was the Dalai Lama's realm, in which that Pontiff's temporal power, as apart from his spiritual authority, reigned supreme. The powers of the two Ambans had waned until their positions were little more than nominal.

The Native States on the Szechuan border east of the old Sino-Tibetan frontier on the Bum La (Chinese Ningching Shan) sent periodical tribute missions to, and were under the nominal protection of, Chengtu and Peking. Some, such as the great Kingdom of De-ge and the Five Hor States, had fallen under the influence of Lhasa, as related above; while others, such as the State of Chala (Tachienlu), and the territories of Batang and Litang, remained, owing to their situation on the main road, more under Chinese influence. The powers of the small Chinese military officials and commissariat officers stationed at Tachienlu, Litang, Batang, and other centres on the main South Road, had, however, dwindled to vanishing point, while the soldiers of the frontier garrisons were often unarmed or existed only in the official imagination for pay roll purposes.

The Kokonor Territory (in Chinese Ch'ing Hai) comprised the whole of the upper basins of the Yangtze and Yellow rivers and part of the Mekong headwater country. Where it was not an uninhabitable desert waste it was thinly peopled by Mongolian and

Tibetan tribes, the former under the Princes of their Banners, and the latter under their own small Chiefs and Headmen, the whole area being nominally under the control of the Sining Amban on the Kansu border. It does not appear that the Lhasa Government ever exercised temporal authority over this vast region of mountain and desert, the inclusion of which in Tibet on European maps has given rise to some confusion in the past.

Part V

The truce between China and Tibet from 1914 to 1917, the resumption of hostilities and the Tibetan advance in 1918, and the subsequent restoration of peace through British mediation by local negotiations on the frontier

[. . .] During the three years following the close of the [Simla] conference in India peace reigned on the frontier between China and Tibet, though civil war and political strife in Western China, reacting on border affairs, prevented the Chinese from making any progress in consolidating their position in the Tibetan inhabited districts left in their hands. Towards the end of 1914 trouble broke out again in Hsiangch'eng, where the Chinese garrison joined the natives in rebelling against Chinese authority. The situation soon got out of hand, and by the spring of the following year the rebels, led by a Chinese officer, gained sufficient strength to advance on and capture Tachienlu, whence they emerged on to Szechuan Proper, and eventually dissolved amongst the hordes of brigands preying on that rich province. Tachienlu was then reoccupied and order restored by a Colonel named Ch'en Hsia-ling (who some years later became Frontier Commissioner).

General Chang Yi, who had fled from his post during the Hsiangch'eng rebellion, was now cashiered by President Yuan Shih-k'ai, who appointed a Szechuanese named Liu Jui-heng to be Frontier Commissioner in his place. In the summer of 1915 President Yuan Shih-k'ai, who was then at the height of his power and about to ascend the Throne as Emperor, made certain important alterations in the administrative arrangements of the Kokonor Territory. This vast expanse of elevated grass country, which, including the whole of the upper basins of the Yangtze and the Yellow river and part of that of the Mekong, covers all the north-eastern quarter of what is usually labelled *Tibet* on European maps, had hitherto been governed by an old Manchu Amban residing at Sining in Kansu, whose control was purely, nominal. This official was now removed by Yuan Shih-k'ai, and the administration of the Kokonor was handed over to the Mahomedan General of Sining. The reasons for this change were connected with the fact that since the revolution of 1911-12 the Mahomedans had become the dominant power in Kansu Province. Up to this time, the Kokonor Territory had been left in peace under the rule of the native Tibetan Chiefs and Mongol Princes, and had thus escaped the fighting and constant unrest which had disturbed the Szechuan frontier ever since the days of Chao Erh-feng. From now on, however, the Kansu Moslems, a hardy race of horsemen who were much more suited to Tibetan campaigning than the soft Szechuanese, began to interfere more and more in the affairs of the Kokonor region. The following document, a *précis* translation of a proclamation issued by the Mahomedan General of Sining in the spring of 1916, is of interest as the first sign of a forward policy on the part of the Kansu Mahomedans in the southern part of the Kokonor Territory bordering on Tibet Proper. It is apparently addressed

to the people of Jyade (the "Country of the Thirty-nine Tribes," situated in the basin of the upper Salween on the Tibetan side of the frontier), warning them of the intention of the Kansu Mahomedans to assert their authority in Nangchen (the "Country of the Twenty-five Tribes," situated in the basin of the upper Mekong on the Chinese side of the frontier), which had hitherto, though nominally under Sining, enjoyed practical independence:

A Proclamation by General Ma, Officer of the Second Class of the Order of the Striped Tiger, Frontier Commissioner of the Kansu Border, General Officer Commanding at Sining and in the Kokonor.

You, people of Jyade, were originally of Chinese stock,⁴ and friendly relations have existed between you and the Chinese Authorities for centuries. During the later days of the Manchu Dynasty ignorant persons on the Szechuan border destroyed your monasteries killed your lamas, and oppressed the people.⁵ Thus you became enraged, and a feud began which has lasted until to-day. But you have no quarrel with Sining, or with Nangchen, the country of the Twenty-five Tribes. Formerly, when the people of the Szechuan border attempted to seize the country of the Twenty-five Tribes,⁶ the Great President at Peking and the Governor of Kansu sent deputies to Jyekundo, who made a careful investigation, with the result that the country of the Twenty-five Tribes was again placed under the jurisdiction of Sining. The Great President gave orders that the Yellow Church should be respected, the lamas protected, and the *ula* service abolished.

The benevolent attitude of the Great President towards the people of the Twenty-five Tribes is known to all.

I, the Kansu Frontier Commissioner, have been instructed to protect the Tibetans of the Kokonor. Good people will be rewarded and evil doers punished.

The monastery of Kumbum is the birth-place of your great reincarnated Buddha. All must have heard of the manner in which the Authorities of Sining protect this monastery and its monks of the Yellow Church.⁷

You, people of Jyade, come to trade at Sining, and the people of Sining go to trade in your country. Passports have been issued to you, and you have been protected like members of one family.

I have often exchanged letters with the Dalai Lama, with whom I am on the friendliest terms. You should therefore follow the Great Lama's example and remain at peace with us.

I am responsible for the protection of Nangchen, the country of the Twenty-five Tribes, and I am sending troops to guard those lands. They are under the jurisdiction of the Sining Authorities, and you, people of Jyade, must not interfere with them. No man can serve two masters, and no country can have two kings. You are well acquainted with the contents of the Scriptures, and the rules laid down therein. Repent therefore of your evil ways and follow righteousness. If you respect the Frontier and pursue your affairs in peace, you may be assured of my forgiveness and of favourable treatment.

Let all obey.

Dated the 26th Day of the 3rd Moon of the 1st Year of the Reign of Hung Hsien.

At the end of 1915 Yuan Shih-k'ai ascended the Throne under the new dynastic title of Hung Hsien, and almost immediately the anti-monarchical rebellion, which was to overthrow him and drive him broken-hearted to a premature grave, broke out in distant Yunnan. One of the results of the success of this rebellion in South-western China was the domination of Szechuan by the Yunnanese; and in October, 1916, a Yunnanese Frontier Commissioner, named Yin Ch'eng-hsien, accompanied by Yunnanese troops, arrived at Tachienlu to take over charge of the frontier.

Yin Ch'eng-hsien was one of the band of able young Japanese trained officers with whose assistance General Tsai Ao was successful in overthrowing the great Yuan Shih-k'ai. He had had previous experience on the frontier, having commanded the Yunnanese column which had operated in the neighbourhood of Atuntze in the campaigns of 1913; and, backed as he was by a Yunnanese Government in control of the rich resources of Szechuan, he might perhaps have been able to restore the Chinese position in Eastern Tibet, which had become yearly more precarious since the revolution of 1911 owing to the neglect of the frontier garrisons by the Szechuanese Authorities.

Unfortunately for the Chinese, hostilities broke out between the provinces of Yunnan and Szechuan soon after, and the early summer of 1917 saw the Yunnanese armies retreating from the burning ruins of Chengtu, the capital of Szechuan. The position of General Yin and his Yunnanese troops at Tachienlu, cut off from their base in Yunnan and surrounded by their enemies, the Szechuanese, soon became desperate, and he eventually withdrew with great difficulty across the mountains *via* Mili to Lichiang in Yunnan. His place as Frontier Commissioner was taken by a Hunanese officer, General Ch'en Hsia-ling, who had been on the border since the days of Chao Erh-feng, and who was not at that time implicated in the dispute between Szechuan and Yunnan.

In the meantime, owing to the fact that both the provincial government of Szechuan and the central government at Peking were too preoccupied with the internal civil wars in China to pay any attention to the Tibetan border, the unfortunate Chinese garrisons on the frontier were completely neglected and left, without supplies of rice, silver, clothing, or ammunition, to shift for themselves and to live on the country as best they could. As a result they had degenerated into little better than brigands, helping themselves to food and money by plundering the natives of the localities where they chanced to be stationed. Nor was it to be expected that respectable Chinese officials would consent to remain in the country under such circumstances; and the administration of the frontier districts thus lapsed into the hands of a number of ex-brigands and military adventurers, who misgoverned and oppressed the natives until rebellion was rife from end to end of the border.

Autonomous Tibet, on the other hand, freed from Chinese rule, had been enjoying years of internal peace and prosperity, and had reorganised and strengthened her frontier army. By the year 1917 the Tibetan Commander-in-Chief, the Kalon Lama, who had faced the Chinese four years previously with untrained and ill-equipped levies, had at his disposal several regiments of comparatively efficient troops, who were as superior to the worn-out Chinese frontier forces as Chao-erh-feng's men had been to the tribesmen and lamas of Kam ten years before.

The Tibetans could scarcely fail to realise that the Chinese were utterly demoralised, that the frontier was open to them and that their compatriots across the border, suffering under the oppressive yoke of the Chinese military, were but waiting for them to advance, to rise and join them in arms. But they were bound by the understanding of 1914 not to attack unless the truce were first broken by the Chinese, and they could be relied on to keep their word. The local Chinese on the frontier, however, acting on their own authority, and without the sanction of the Chinese Government, deliberately provoked a resumption of hostilities, and paid for doing so with overwhelming defeat.

The Chinese frontier forces were at this time divided into three independent bodies, under the commands of the local generals at Chamdo and Batang and the Frontier Commissioner at Tachienlu respectively, each of whom controlled civil and military affairs in his own sphere, and regarded one another, and the various provincial authorities of Western China, with mutual distrust and suspicion.

The Chinese general commanding at Chamdo, named P'eng Jih-sheng, had been on the frontier since the beginning of Chao Erh-feng's campaigns, and for the last few years had been absolute autocrat of the northern districts of the border under his control, appointing and dismissing civil and military officials, and collecting and disposing of the revenues of the country. He was notorious for his intolerant attitude towards the Tibetans, who in turn held him responsible for the destruction of the great monasteries of Chamdo, Draya, and Yemdo in previous campaigns, and who therefore regarded him as the arch-enemy after the disappearance of Chao Erh-feng.

Towards the end of 1917 General P'eng, chafing under the continued neglect of himself and his troops by the Chinese Government and the Authorities of Szechuan, which had indeed reduced his command to the direst straits, apparently conceived the idea of breaking the truce and advancing on Lhasa on his own responsibility, with the two-fold object of securing loot and supplies, and of obtaining the post of Frontier Commissioner, or of Resident in Tibet, by bringing off a striking victory against the Tibetans. Imbued, perhaps, with the recollection of Chao Erh-feng's easy victories against the ill-armed lamas and tribesmen of Kam and unopposed march to Lhasa, he and his advisers played directly into the hands of the Tibetans, and gave them the opportunity they wanted to recover some of the country of which they had been deprived by Chao Erh-feng.

A pretext for resuming hostilities was easily found in an incident which occurred between the opposing Chinese and Tibetan outposts beyond Riwoche, a few marches north-west of Chamdo. A trivial dispute arose over the cutting of grass for fodder on the mountain which served as a boundary between the two sides, and the Chinese seized a subordinate Tibetan officer and carried him off to Chamdo. The Tibetans attempted a rescue and some skirmishing took place. The Chinese thereupon claimed that the truce was at an end, and prepared to advance.

It appears that the Kalon Lama, commanding the Tibetan frontier army, did all he could in reason to avoid a resumption of hostilities, and that he wrote to General P'eng on several occasions, demanding the surrender of the Tibetan officer and reminding the Chinese that both sides had agreed in 1914 to keep the peace pending a final settlement by diplomatic means with the mediation of Great Britain. His first communication was left unanswered; the reply to his second was a letter filled with dung; and he was finally informed in answer to his third appeal that the Chinese were advancing

on Lhasa. The following is a translation of a letter addressed to the Kalon Lama by General P'eng on this occasion; it was apparently dated early in January, 1918:

I have received your letters. You must be aware that Tibet, which was formerly subject to the Emperor of China, is now subject to the President of the Chinese Republic. You Tibetans have rebelled, as servants revolting against their masters. Evil thoughts have entered your hearts and your lips have uttered falsehoods. The Chinese Emperor can protect his own dominions and has no need of British mediation. The Chinese soldiers who have advanced from Riwoche are travelling in their own country and can go where they please. The Chinese forces are now about to advance on Lhasa, and you are ordered to make all the necessary preparations for their march.

At the same time the Chinese troops did actually advance from Riwoche, and killed a high Tibetan officer in the resulting fight. The Kalon Lama thereupon declared the truce at an end and called his men to arms.

General P'eng's plans appear to have been to advance in three columns, one by the North Road from Riwoche, one by the main road from Enda, and one by a road from Draya leading across the Mekong into the Tibetan district of Bashü. All three columns duly advanced, and the first two were driven back, fighting stubbornly, on Chamdo. The Draya column crossed the Mekong, met the enemy, and fled precipitately in such confusion that the Tibetans followed on their heels and captured Draya, together with two mountain guns and several hundreds of Chinese soldiers with their rifles, within a short time of the opening of hostilities.

The fall of Draya cut the main road in General P'eng's rear, and the two big passes on the De-ge road being seized by the Tibetans immediately afterwards, Chamdo was completely invested. South of Draya the Tibetans advanced into Markam, captured or dispersed all the Chinese troops stationed in that neighbourhood, and reached and occupied the old historical frontier line on the Bum La (Chinese Ning-ching Shan).

General P'eng managed to get messages out from Chamdo by the North Road and summoned an outlying battalion garrisoning Kanze, the only one of his battalions still intact, to his aid. These troops advanced rapidly to the neighbourhood of Toba, two marches short of Chamdo, where they were surrounded by the Tibetans in a monastery and surrendered after a short fight. Another small relief force, bringing up supplies and ammunition from the direction of Tachienlu, only reached De-ge Gönchen, where they learned of the Tibetan victories and whence they fled precipitately back to Kanze.

Chamdo was now completely cut off. The Chinese garrison inside, however, about a thousand strong, put up a strong resistance, unlike the other battalions of the frontier force, which had in each case been surrounded and had surrendered with scarcely a fight. At length, after a siege lasting several months, in the course of which more than half of the garrison, were killed or died of disease, General P'eng capitulated towards the end of April, 1918.

The following is a *précis* translation of a Chinese account of the events which led to a resumption of hostilities between China and Tibet towards the end of 1917, of the surrender of the Chinese relief force at Toba, and of the siege and fall of Chamdo. It was written by the Commandant of the battalion of General P'eng's Frontier Force which surrendered at Toba, and was printed and published at Batang in the summer

of 1918. A full translation, from which this summary is taken, was published in the *North China Herald* of Shanghai.

During the autumn of 1917 an officer of the artillery stationed at Riwoche took some soldiers to cut grass on the mountain side, where he happened to meet two Tibetan soldiers, whom he caused to be seized and taken back to Riwoche. When the Kalon Lama heard of this he wrote to General P'eng requesting that the affair be settled by negotiation. General P'eng, however, ordered the two Tibetans to be sent to Chamdo.

The Tibetans then placed men in ambush and fired on our troops, who withdrew to Riwoche. But T'ien, the Commandant of the Riwoche battalion, sent reinforcements which drove off the Tibetans. General P'eng thereupon ordered Chang, Commandant of the 7th battalion, to advance from Chamdo to Riwoche.

At that time I strongly advised the General to proceed with caution in this matter, and to enter into negotiations with the Kalon Lama before sending reinforcements. But he would not agree, and ordered me to proceed with my battalion also to Riwoche. There we held a conference, myself and Commandants Chang and T'ien, as a result of which we wrote to the Kalon Lama proposing negotiations, and suggesting that each party should keep to their own boundaries and punish their own offenders. But Commandant Chang, unknown to the others, secretly wrote a private letter, and wrecked the whole affair.

Again I suggested to General P'eng that the matter be settled by negotiation, since the Tibetans had agreed to that course and to both sides keeping to their own boundaries and punishing their own offenders. Subsequently I received orders to return to Chamdo, where I informed the General of Chang's secret designs. The very next day a despatch was received from Commandant T'ien to the effect that Chang had advanced during the night with his battalion, had been surrounded, and was in great danger.

The General then ordered me to advance on Riwoche with two companies. Again I made representations, entreating him to refer to the Governor of Szechuan for instructions before taking further hostile action against the Tibetans. But he insisted on fighting, and I had to proceed towards Riwoche.

Later on I received orders to leave the front in order to arrange certain matters on the North Road. When about to depart I repeatedly warned the General not to fight the Tibetans, and advised him to instruct Commandant Chang not to advance without orders. But he only replied that he was not afraid of the enemy.

I accordingly left Chamdo for Tachienlu, whence I wrote to the General telling him of civil war raging in China and of the impossibility of securing the requisite supplies of arms and ammunition, and advising him to negotiate peace with the Tibetans.

At the end of the year I was appointed with my battalion to Kanze. No sooner had I taken over the seals of office there than I received an urgent despatch from General P'eng ordering me to proceed with all haste with my troops to aid in the defence of Chamdo, and to raise local militia levies everywhere for the same purpose.

I wrote to the General from De-ge Gönchen, telling him that the relief force I was bringing was too small to be of any use. Advancing further to T'ungp'u I received another message from the General urging me to hasten on, and directing me to advance to Toba and fight my way through to Chamdo on a certain day on which he would send troops to fight their way out to meet me. I thereupon determined to attack Toba and Reya.

Again a further special courier reached me from the General with a message to the effect that a concerted effort was to be made on a fixed day to effect a junction of our forces and overcome the enemy.

Accordingly I started in due course from Chorzhung for Beri monastery. On arrival there I found the enemy in force ahead, and so decided to hold the monastery. The battle then began, the Tibetans pressing closely on the building, climbing through the windows and on to the roof. Just as I was considering the advisability of ordering a retreat, my revolver was seized and I was made a prisoner. Some of the soldiers were killed, others were wounded, and the rest surrendered. General P'eng had agreed to make a sortie on that day, but had failed to do so.

Shortly afterwards I was sent to Olo Ch'iao as a prisoner, and was subsequently removed to Chamdo. All the others were sent into Tibet.

The following are the details of the siege and fall of Chamdo.

Before the Szechuan bridge and the hills overlooking the town were captured the Kalon Lama wrote on several occasions urging that the matter be settled by negotiation. But in reply General P'eng filled his letters with dung, reviled the Kalon Lama, and challenged him to fight. The Tibetans captured the hills behind the town. The Szechuan bridge was hard pressed and then captured. Thereupon the General surrendered. Two guns and over 1,400 rifles were given up. Commandant Chang committed suicide by jumping into the river.

General P'eng placed his private treasure, over 40,000 rupees, in a coffin and buried it; but the Tibetans were informed by spies, and dug it up. This naturally led to their digging up all the graves of the soldiers honourably killed in action.

General P'eng's actions were throughout influenced by a letter he had received holding out hopes that he might secure the post of Frontier Commissioner.

During the siege General Nieh, second-in-command, suggested the advisability of arranging a truce. He was accused of being in communication with the Tibetans, and General P'eng caused him to be summarily shot. His secretary was decapitated.

After the surrender the captured soldiers were sent off into Tibet. The wounded men, when about to start, vainly begged General P'eng for a few rupees. Whereupon the Kalon Lama, hearing of this, gave to each man some rice and eight rupees.

Then the Kalon Lama came himself to Chamdo, and General P'eng gave him presents, and petitioned for a post under the Lhasa Government. But the Kalon summoned the General to his presence, and asked him whether he represented the Central Government of China, or the Governor General of Szechuan Province, or the Frontier Commissioner; why had he killed the

Tibetan messengers; why had he replied with letters filled with dung; why had he refused to negotiate a peaceful settlement; what were his present intentions? General P'eng replied laying all the blame on his subordinate officers, who, he explained, had insisted on fighting. The Kalon remarked that he, General P'eng, had executed his second-in-command; why had he not also dealt in like manner with his disobedient subordinates. The General then begged for mercy.

With the fall of Chamdo the greater part of the old Szechuan Frontier Force (*Pien Chün*), which had garrisoned the border since the days of Chao Erh-feng, had ceased to exist. Two or three thousand Chinese prisoners of war were marched off to Lhasa, where they were well treated, judging by oriental standards, and whence they were subsequently repatriated to West China as in 1912 with the assistance of the British Authorities, *via* India, Burma, and Yunnan.

The Chinese troops, still left to defend the frontier against the advancing Tibetans, consisted of a few worn-out and demoralised battalions, the remnants of the Frontier Force, at Batang and other stations on the South Road, and the Frontier Commissioner's own brigade at Tachienlu. No move was made by either of these commands to save General P'eng and his troops in Chamdo. The troops at Batang were in any case incapable of making an offensive movement owing to lack of arms, ammunition and supplies, while General Ch'en Hsia-ling, the Frontier Commissioner, apart from his probable reluctance to assist a dangerous rival who had brought on his own destruction by his own acts, was at that time engaged (after the fashion of the various semi-independent military leaders in Western China) in a private campaign against another Szechuanese general, named Chang Wu-lan, in the Chiench'ang valley south-east of Tachienlu. When, however, having defeated and put to death Chang Wu-lan, and possessed himself of the latter's stores of ammunition, silver and opium, it became apparent that the Tibetan advance would, unless promptly checked, reach Tachienlu itself, General Ch'en Hsia-ling found himself compelled to turn his attention to the frontier, and hurriedly despatched two to three thousand troops along the North Road to Kanze with orders to meet and check the Tibetan advance. In the meantime, however, the Tibetans, assisted by the entire native populations of the newly-recovered territories, had overrun Chamdo, Draya, Markam, Gonjo and De-ge, and were approaching Kanze and Nyarong (Chantui) in one direction, and Batang in another.

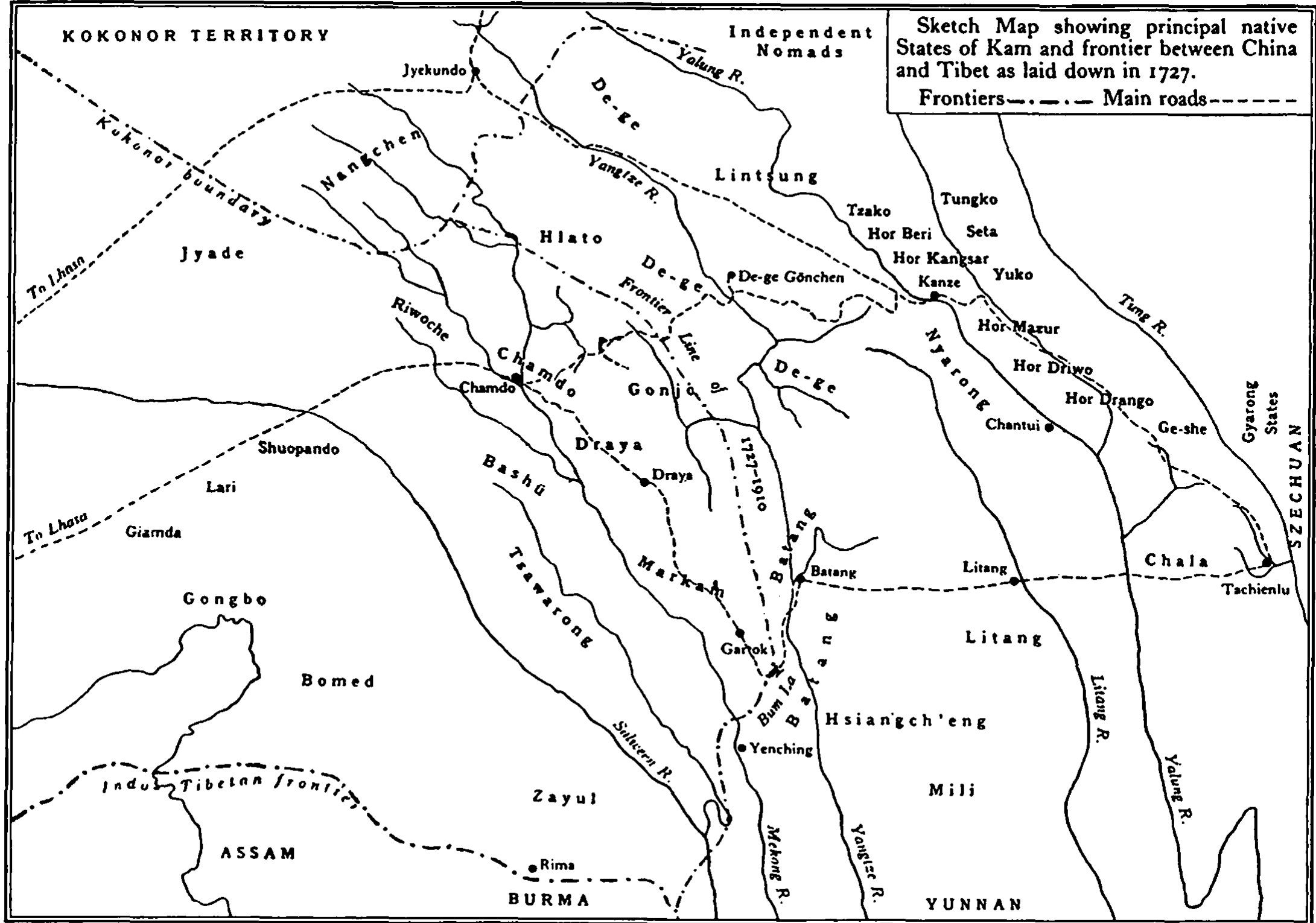
By the middle of the summer of 1918 the Tibetans, advancing on Nyarong and Kanze from De-ge, had reached the village of Rongbatsa, a long day's march west of Kanze, which was held by the main body of the Frontier Commissioner's troops. Heavy fighting at Rongbatsa ensued, with the result that the Chinese, while holding their entrenched positions in the village, found their communications with their base at Kanze in danger of being cut by the more mobile Tibetan forces, who were also working round into Nyarong, and thus threatening to cut off the entire Chinese army from Tachienlu. At the same time a large Tibetan force was massed on the old Bum La frontier line for an advance on Batang; while another Tibetan column, marching south from De-ge, had surrounded a battalion of the Batang Command thrown forward to meet them at a place called Gaji. Another month or two would possibly have seen several thousand more Chinese prisoners in Tibetan hands, and the Lhasa forces in possession of all the country up to Tachienlu.

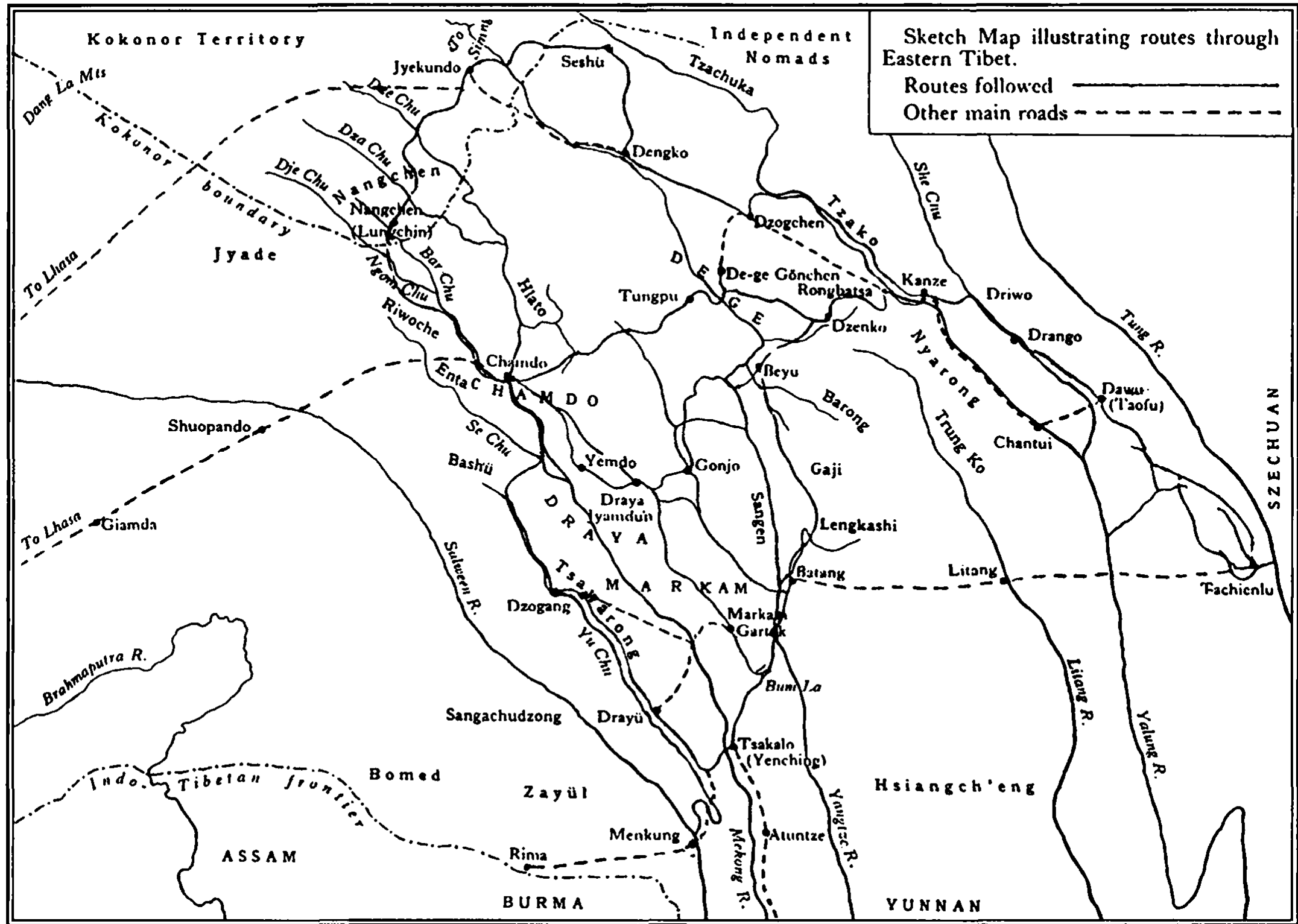
At this juncture, however, the local Chinese leaders on the frontier invoked the mediation of the British Consular Agent stationed in Western China [Teichman himself], whose duty it was to watch events on the border with a view to keeping the peace between the two parties pending a final settlement of the dispute by diplomatic means, and, the Tibetan leaders having been persuaded to stay their advance, the fighting ceased. The truce, however, was only just effected in time; for the further the Tibetans advanced towards Tachienlu, into regions like Batang, Litang, Kanze, Nyarong, and Chala, the more difficult a settlement became; since it would have been equally difficult to induce the Tibetans to withdraw from regions they had once occupied as to persuade the Chinese to surrender their claim to districts which they had long regarded as part of Szechuan province.

Peace negotiations followed between the various Chinese and Tibetan frontier authorities, the British representative acting as middleman, and arrangements were eventually concluded providing for a general cessation of hostilities, and the mutual withdrawal of the troops of both sides out of touch with one another. The provisional boundary between Szechuan and Tibet resulting from these frontier negotiations chanced to coincide to a considerable extent with the old seventeenth century line of the Manchus, the Chinese remaining in control of Batang, Litang, Nyarong, Kanze and the country to the east of those States, while the Tibetans retained Chamdo, Draya, Markam and De-ge, and the country further west. By the end of 1918 the frontier regions had settled down after the conclusion of the truce, the trade routes had been reopened, and peaceful relations generally had once more been resumed between China and Tibet.⁸

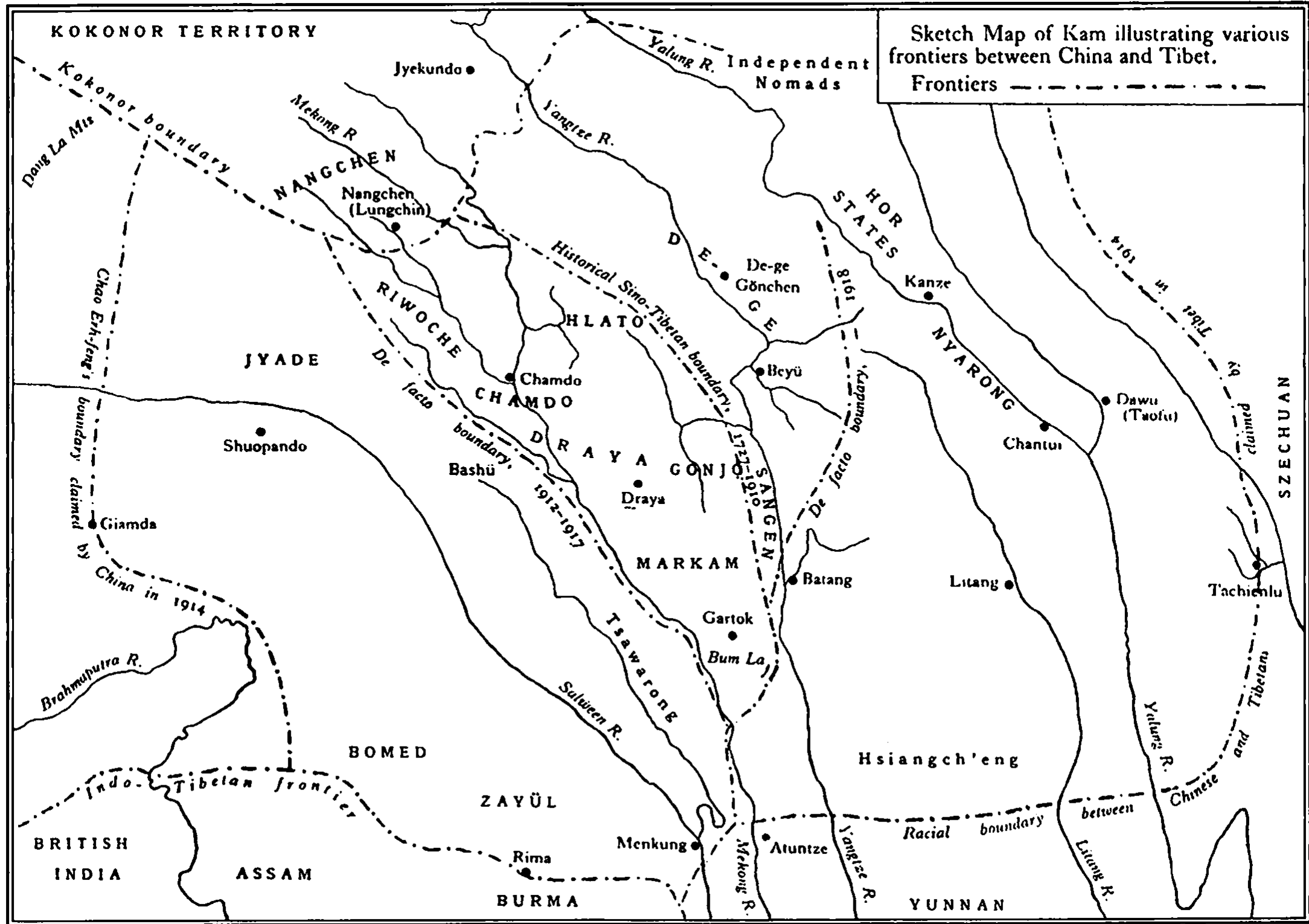
Notes

- 1 The whole of Eastern Tibet covered by these States is known to the Tibetans as *Domed*, or *Kam*, a vague geographical term without definite political significance (cf. *Amdo*, the Tibetan name for the northeastern portion of the Tibetan plateau on the Kansu border). The word *Menya* is another name vaguely applied by the local Tibetans to the country south-west of Tachienlu; it means "the lower Yalung valley" (cf. *Nyarong*, the valley of the Nya, or Yalung).
- 2 Nyarong (the valley of the Nya or Yalung river below Kanze) was originally divided up into five independent clans, which were unified in the middle of the nineteenth century under the chieftainship of Gombu Nyamjyel.
- 3 See Teichman, E., *Travels of a Consular Officer . . .*, p. 24.
- 4 The people of Jyade, who are nowadays entirely Tibetans, are supposed to have been originally immigrants from China or Mongolia; whence the name Jyade, or Chinese Lands.
- 5 This appears to refer to the campaigns of Chao Erh-feng and his successors.
- 6 In 1915 General P'eng Jih-sheng of Chamdo, acting either on his own half or for the Szechuan Authorities, attempted to appropriate Nangchen, and some fighting occurred between his men and the Kansu Mahomedans near Jyekundo.
- 7 The monastery of Kumbum (Chinese T'a-erh Ssu), near Sining on the Kansu-Kokonor border, was the birth-place of Tsongkaba, the reformer of Tibetan Buddhism, and the founder of the *Gelugba* sect. The place was formerly known as Tsongka, hence the reformer's name. He was born in the middle of the fourteenth century.
- 8 The journeys described in the following chapters [of *Travels of a Consular Officer . . .*] were made in connection with these peace negotiations.





Sketch Map of Kam illustrating various frontiers between China and Tibet.
Frontiers - - - - -



A FRONTIER INCIDENT

Louis Magrath King

Source: L. M. King, *China in Turmoil: Studies in Personality*, London: Heath Cranton, 1927, pp. 180–208.

This is the story of how a high Tibetan official, the Kalon Lama, met an unexpected crisis in his and his country's affairs. It was one of those cases where a decision one way or the other had to be made, where inaction were as positive as action, and a wait-and-see policy out of the question. Nor was there time to refer the matter to superior authority. The responsibility for whatever was done or not done was his and his alone. He was called upon, in fact, to make an immediate decision in a matter of high policy. He did so, throwing in his lot, as was his wont, with the angels, and he perished utterly. Or perhaps that is rather begging the question. In life, or anyway in high politics, things are hardly as simple as that. However, we can say that he did what he thought was right regardless of consequences, which is as near as any of us can get to right in the abstract. And he passed on, but whether *propter hoc* or merely *post hoc* will probably never be established to the complete satisfaction of the people. Public opinion in that particular part of the world has it that it was the former, and, indeed, it is more in consonance with artistic values, with our sense of the fitness of things, that it should be this and not the prosaic other. Man must pay for his flights into the empyrean. What sort of world would it be if you could be heroic with impunity, if Semele were not consumed with fire or Belgium devastated? But happily life and our conception of what is fit and proper do not always tally, and so it is quite likely that it was merely *post hoc* after all.

He was one of the four members of the Council of State or Cabinet, and concurrently Governor-General of the great frontier province of Kham, and Commander-in-Chief of the army upon which Tibet relied to maintain her historic sovereignty, recently reasserted with effect throughout the length and breadth of the land with the exception of a fringe of frontier territory still in the hands of her great neighbour, China, who, moreover, continued to claim an ultimate suzerainty over the whole country. He was, in fact, in the most responsible post a subject could occupy, and he held the confidence, indeed was the right-hand, of his august master, the Bodhisat Avalokitesvara, embodied in His Holiness the Dalai Lama, Divine Ruler of Tibet.

Impregably entrenched in the regard of deity incarnate and in high office, he appeared to be a man beyond the reach of the shafts of chance and circumstance. But Fate knew otherwise. Working out her inexorable purposes, she set him a nice problem delicately attuned to the man he was. To a man of a different type, one of narrower vision or less scrupulous a sense of responsibility, it would have been no

problem at all. If the wind is tempered to the shorn lamb, so also are there loose rocks about to keep the mountain goat intrigued; in other words, we are all of us happily provided from time to time with the particular difficulties and assuagements we require for our due development. There was no particular reason why the clouds should have gathered just then, unless it was that Fate had decided to drench him. The Tibetan question was for the moment dormant, and neither side desired or were in a position to press their claims and contentions by force of arms. The armistice which had brought to an end the hostilities of 1917–18 had been scrupulously observed on both sides, and responsible opinion on the one side as on the other seemed to agree that the general question between the two countries was not susceptible of a military solution. The political horizon was clear, peace reigned and nothing of particular importance was coming through the oracles, which seem almost to be the form the shadow of coming events takes in that part of the world. Then Fate took a hand, or it may have been *Terang-gungchi*, the sprite of mischief whom the Tibetans believe to play quite an important role in human affairs. However that may be, the chaos which is China of a sudden stretched forth, octopus-like, a tentacle, and he was in the coils.

It was like this. In the aforesaid hostilities which were happily brought to an end through the mediation of my predecessor on the frontier, the Tibetan armies had recovered a large slice of their lost territories, ousting the alien claimant from the Lama states of Riwoche, Chamdo and Draya, the kingdoms of Derge, Hlato and Lintsung, the provinces of Markham and Conjo, and the Thirty-nine Banners of Jyade. As a result they found themselves in possession of a new north-eastern frontier in the form of a salient which lay athwart the lines of communication, between the Chinese frontier outposts of Jyekundo in the north and Tachienlu in the extreme east. That in itself was not of much consequence. Commercial intercourse was in no way interrupted; and of political and military co-operation, to which of course the wedge could not but be an obstacle, there was normally little or none between the places concerned, each being under a virtually independent satrap who took no particular interest in his distant fellow. Soon afterwards, however, the Central Government of China decided to send by this route a consignment of arms and ammunition and funds to the Tachienlu satrap, or – to give him his proper title – the Occupation Commissioner (that is, Civil and Military Governor) of the frontier area, who, unlike most of the military leaders in the province in which his satrapy lay, was sympathetic to the party then in power at Peking. It was a small consignment but still large enough, it was thought, to prevent his political extinction, a matter of definite moment to Peking. Large enough also, however, but that could not be helped, to constitute too tempting a morsel to the various satraps through whose domains it would have had to pass if it had been sent by the ordinary route. Indeed, the latter had actually been tried and the consignment had been swallowed almost before it had got under way, gobbled up, in fact, by the first commander who saw it – like some worm spotted by a lucky chicken. Hence the tremendously circuitous route chosen for the second attempt, a route which had, however, the advantage of lying entirely within regions controlled by men who still took orders from Peking, apart, that is, from the last stage which lay through Tibetan territory, the wedge aforesaid. Its passage through that was unavoidably left for the Commissioner himself to arrange as best he could and if he could.

He proceeded to do so. He detailed a battalion of troops to proceed to Jyekundo to take delivery of the said supplies, wrote to the Kalon Lama requesting him to allow it

right of way across the salient, and at the same time sent up two deputies with full powers to arrange the necessary details of procedure, transport and so on. He took it for granted that the Kalon Lama would accede to his request. His proposition was, in his own eyes, eminently reasonable; all he wanted was his supplies, his convoy would merely cross the salient like any merchant caravan, pick up the consignment and bring it back, a matter of a month or two at the most, and then everybody would be as they were before. He had no military or territorial designs, no ulterior motives, no anything save a fixed determination to get those supplies of his, upon which his political survival depended. His enemies – not Tibetans, but his own fellow-countrymen and military rivals – were beating at his gates, he was short of arms and ammunition and money, and his only hope of maintaining his position lay in getting in these supplies. There was of course nothing illicit in the matter, they were his, consigned to him by the government of his country. He was entitled to them and he must have them or go under. The whole thing was a domestic matter, of no concern whatsoever of the Tibetans; it was merely a geographical accident that the route of approach passed through their territory, and all they had to do was to let his convoy through. He was not even raising the major question, namely whether the Tibetans were in rightful occupation of the salient at all. In his eyes they were not; a brief year ago it had been part of his own domain, but it was not his purpose to complicate a simple issue by digging up that aspect of it. As far as his present proposition was concerned that particular question could remain in the abeyance to which it had already got accustomed, lulled to sleep, like some fierce dog, by the measured periods of diplomacy.

It was all very considerate of him, and no doubt he felt that such an attitude of sweet reasonableness could hardly but bring its own reward. Moreover, he conceived himself as giving the Tibetan authorities an opportunity of conceding of their own volition what he could, if he liked, exact by force of arms. But could he? It can he said that he was convinced he could. Nor was he, in his own view, asking anything impossible of the Tibetans. What possible objection could they raise? Immediate compliance was their proper role. Like all of us, anyone who has happily provided himself with a fixed idea, he could see no flaw whatsoever in his case. As far as this matter was concerned, he was in a pulpit, made, like all pulpits, for one.

Things had reached this stage when I returned to the frontier after an absence of several years, and immediately set forth on a tour which developed into a comprehensive journey, lasting some eight months in all, throughout the length and breadth of Eastern Tibet. The Commissioner, an old friend of mine from my previous term of service on the frontier, took the opportunity to request me to support his proposition *vis-à-vis* the Kalon Lama, but I had to be non-committal. Possible difficulties and objections were of course obvious to me, and, anyway, the whole thing had nothing to do with me, except in so far as it might endanger the peace of the frontier. It had been agreed that the Tibetan question should be settled by negotiation between the three countries concerned, Tibet, China and Great Britain, who all desired that the situation should not be complicated by regional developments, most important of which were, of course, anything in the nature of a renewal of hostilities on the frontier.

I reserved my opinion and set forth. About a fortnight's trek brought me to the farthest Chinese garrison post, on the very edge of the salient, where I found the two delegates kicking their heels. It appeared that the Tibetan authorities were not prepared either to discuss the Commissioner's proposition or to receive his delegates

on their, the Tibetan, side of the frontier. An impasse, in fact. I crossed the *de facto* frontier and in another fortnight reached the Kalon Lama's headquarters at Chamdo, a town situated on the right bank of the Mekong (there known as the Dza Chu) at the point where the river is joined by its affluent, the Om Chu. I was received by the Governor-General with the greatest ceremony and courtesy. He had sent officials to meet me, the oracles were consulted to discover the most auspicious day for my entry into his capital, and on the date thus happily fixed I rode in escorted by his own bodyguard of twenty-five cavalry, flags flying and bugles blowing, in all a gay display which the whole town, of course, turned out to see. My comings and goings were in general thus ceremoniously marked throughout my wanderings in Tibetan territory. Wherever there happened to be troops they paraded, and all the available sources of play were put into use, processions, flags, bugles, bagpipes, lama orchestras, bonfires and so on, all helping to lend a gala air to these occasions. It was all in strong contrast to the experiences of travellers in Tibet in the old days, when our prestige in that country was not what it is now.

The Kalon Lama lost no time in putting me in possession of the Tibetan point of view regarding the Commissioner's proposition. The flawless case proved, when viewed from the Tibetan standpoint, full of flaws, the greatest of which, like Aaron's serpent, swallowed up the rest, namely that Tibet could not permit the passage of Chinese troops through her territory. That the accommodation the Commissioner required was temporary only, that he had no ulterior purposes, was raising no other issues, and was in a desperate plight, all this made no appeal whatsoever to the Tibetan authorities. They were quite as sure as the Commissioner whose was the rightful ownership of the territory, and moreover they were in possession of it, *de facto* by force of arms and *de jure* by, *inter alia*, the terms of the armistice signed by the Commissioner's own plenipotentiaries. And, what would have stung him most had he been aware of it, they were entirely and unaffectedly indifferent to his woes. A beetle on its back could scarcely have aroused less emotion in them. The colossus before whom men trembled in his own domain had become, viewed from this distance, invisible to the naked eye. They decided, however, after mature deliberation, that his letter might as well be given a reply as not, and the Kalon Lama was good enough at my suggestion to couch it in the terms of a *non possumus* as being less provocative than the blunter *nolens*. And so the matter rested for the moment while the imp of mischief thought again.

I had not previously met the Kalon Lama but got to know him pretty well in the months that followed. We necessarily saw a great deal of each other, crowding into a few weeks what would have been the normal intercourse of years under different circumstances, so that what our acquaintance lacked in point of duration was amply made up for in concentration. He was a man of great dignity, imposing presence and out-standing force of character, no ordinary man this, no nonentity pitch-forked by favour or circumstance into high office, but a born leader of men – that stood out all over him. He was a vigorous man in the prime of life, tall, large-boned and heavily built and obviously of great physical strength, hirsute, virile, massive, with a dominant air about him of authority. The heroes of old must have been, one imagines, like this, and the Moor of Venice. Othello to the life – that was the impression he gave one, but there was no Desdemona in his case, for he was celibate, a priest. Astonishing in any country but Tibet that a priest should hold the offices he held, or that such a man as he should be a priest at all, but the Tibetan priesthood is *sui generis*, not, as in other

countries, a body of men more or less cut off from secular employment and confined to religious duties, but rather of the nature of a special order of men, the elect of heaven, permeating the body politic and engaging, many of them, in mundane occupations, almost as though it were imagined that religion was not a thing apart from everyday life. In Tibet, in fact, Church and State are not so much allied as one and indivisible, and the sovereign of it all is a priest.

The Governor-General and the priest were in no conflict in the soul of the Kalon Lama. In serving his god he was serving his country and *vice versa*, and he bore with ease and dignity his dual, indeed his multiple, burden, for he was soldier and politician as well. Dignity, the outward manifestation of a soul at peace, was the salient characteristic of the man. Like Sir Galahad, his heart was pure; and he was absolutely sure of himself. He had Deity behind him, Infallibility, and all he had to do was to obey orders to the letter. I doubt it ever occurred to him that a case would arise, as it was now to do, where that prop would be out of his reach.

He was tremendously placid, I do not remember ever seeing in him any signs of boredom or impatience, to say nothing of the fidgets, even at those interminable feasts we had to sit through together lasting for hours on end and for three days in succession in each case. Conversation at such functions inevitably flagged, confined as it practically was to him and me by the Tibetan convention which forbade his inferiors from speaking in his presence unless they were spoken to. Ever and anon he or I would make a remark which would run its poor course to die prematurely in an atmosphere of courteous assent. Then silence while another bright thought germinated, only to meet with the same fate. It was not that we had nothing to say; on the contrary, in our private conversations he talked fluently and to the point, marshalling his facts and presenting his views with skill and vigour. But under the appalling conditions of these banquets it was impossible to carry on a conversation at all. Animation was sapped at its root. An English hostess if a party of hers were to go like this would feel like screaming, and no wonder. But there was nothing to be done, and we just sat on our raised dais and bore it all hour after hour while dish followed dish slowly and endlessly. I was in a better position than he, for I could fortify myself with the wine and smoke all the time, both of which indulgences were denied him by his cloth, and I wondered if he was as bored as I and hoped I showed it no more than he did, if, that is, he was bored at all. If he was, there was no sign of it. His massive face wore throughout an air of courteous composure as though he found nothing oppressive in the alternation of long silences and desultory remarks. In truth, self-restraint was second nature to him, hedged about as he was in his high office like a divinity. High ceremony, which has given way with us to democracy where even monarchs can mix with their people like ordinary mortals and presidents more or less have to, is still in all its pristine vigour in Tibet. The most punctilious respect was his daily portion and there was never any respite for him from it. All who came in touch with him, officials or private citizens, high and low, never for a moment forgot the deference which was the due of his office. His subordinates, even where they were Generals or civilian officials of equivalent or still higher rank, invariably stood in his presence, with head slightly bowed, while he gave his orders or discussed official matters with them, and when the interview was over they withdrew backwards. Officers in uniform would salute him smartly in our own manner, but with body bent double, a queer combination of the formalities of two conventions. When he went abroad horsemen

would dismount and all and sundry draw aside, many of the people dropping on to their knees or even prostrating themselves as his cavalcade went by. He had no privacy at all. Wherever he went, whatever he did, even when he slept, there were always retainers in attendance upon him. They missed nothing, anticipating his every need, a motion on his part to rise or to sit and they sprang forward to assist; when he mounted his horse ready hands held the bridle and stirrups and helped him up, and when he dismounted helped him down, and supported him across the courtyard as though he were old and infirm instead of being a more powerful man than any about him. He could not even drink a cup of tea, the national beverage, without a cup-bearer dropping on his knees and lifting the cup up to him ceremoniously with both hands, for all the world as though Caesar was being offered a crown. In the circumstances he had of course no recreations or relaxations of any kind, being precluded from some of them by his cloth and from all by virtue of his position, the veneration which set him on a pedestal, a being apart.

Somehow or other, in that milieu, and with a man of his almost majestic presence, one missed the incongruity of it all. It seemed natural, he fitted the role so perfectly and everybody, including himself, took it all for granted. I often wondered if he did not find it irksome, but if he did he gave no indication of it. Clearly he had long got used to the restraints and the limitations of his position and very likely looked upon them as the price he paid for his office and the veneration of the people. *Noblesse oblige*. Lesser men have their comforts and their pleasures as children have their marbles. He had pomp and power, though I doubt if these made any special appeal to his mind, for he did not appear, nor was he reputed, to take delight in them. His dignity was marred by no trace of pomposity and his mind seemed to be set on his duty, what he owed to God and man not on what others owed to him. His days were full, his time absorbed by the manifold details of his administrative work from which his only relaxation was found in the religious exercises of a Tibetan priest, prayer and mystical meditation.

After two or three weeks at Chamdo I made a round trip to Jyekundo and back, a journey of about a month's duration which broke a certain amount of new ground in the geographical sense, especially as regards that part of it which went through the nomad lands of Hlato. At Jyekundo I found that the Commissioner's supplies, *fons et origo* of the crisis that was threatening, had not arrived. Had they been swallowed *en route*, another chicken rewarded for its powers of observation? Were the clouds destined thus to remove themselves, the whole thing to go up in smoke? It looked like it, and I fervently hoped so, but alas it was not to be. If the consignment had been swallowed, it was in due course regurgitated and we were again as we were. But I am anticipating.

Returned to Chamdo I found further letters from the Commissioner and his delegates, burdened with the same refrain, in reply to which the Kalon Lama reiterated his *non possumus*, and I pointed out that the alleged supplies were not at Jyekundo at all. I then went on another round trip, this time to Riwoche and the actual scene of the incident which gave rise to the hostilities of 1917-18, the valley of Mara-Geka on the confines of the Thirty-nine Banners of Jyade. Then back again to Chamdo where I found the Kalon Lama suffering from a recurrence of an old complaint of his which seemed to be the gout, a natural enough affection, it would almost seem, to a man of his bulk and habits, for he really needed much more exercise than the circumstances,

as we have seen permitted him to take. His left leg and foot gave him a considerable amount of pain which he bore with his usual composure, indeed ignored, carrying on as usual, and there was nothing to indicate that he was in the throes of a disease he was to die of in the brief space of a couple of years, that is, if die of it he did. Medicinal treatment and dieting were reinforced in his case by the ministrations of the priests, to wit, prayers and the imprinting upon the swollen parts of seals bearing the mystic formula *Om Mani Padme Hum*. He asked me how we treated such a complaint in England, and while I had to confess my ignorance I suggested iodine lotion. I gave him some, he tried it, politely commended its efficacy and I enthusiastically gave him all rest I had, but I doubt if it did him any good.

A further interchange of letters with the Commissioner and his delegates, and I set forth on another trip, for Atuntzu in the extreme south, a round journey which took with halts upwards of two months. Here again my travels broke new ground, it being my good fortune to be the first and still the only white man to travel down the Salween River at these latitudes (29° and 30° N.). There is something exhilarating in being the first in such matters and I think all travellers will agree with me that it has nothing to do with getting one's name into guide-books as Ruskin in the preface to the second edition of "Sesame and Lilies" would appear to imagine. Rather it is the lure of the unknown, the subjective satisfaction of the pioneer in anything, which finds, I should imagine, its intensest expression in the realm of scientific discovery.

The situation came to a head while I was on this trip. The Commissioner's supplies duly reached Jyekundo and he wrote to the Kalon Lama, repeating himself to me, that he was sending his convoy to collect them without further ado and that if the Tibetans opposed its passage the responsibility for the renewal of hostilities would be theirs. The Tibetan garrisons need not even, unless they preferred to, evacuate the road; it was enough if they refrained from hostilities and allowed his convoy to pass in peace, and so on. I replied to the Commissioner immediately, from the place his letter reached me on my travels, pointing out that it was an act of war in itself to send troops across a frontier and that, hence, if he did so, the responsibility for whatever occurred would be his and not the Kalon Lama's. The latter, for his part, reasseverated his position and warned the Commissioner in effect that if his convoy was sent forward his blood would be on his own head. At the same time he suggested to me that I cut across country and dissuade the Commissioner from his evident intention of forcing the passage. However, I could not see my way to comply. Time and space forbade; I was, in fact, too far away to get anywhere in time. Even it were not so, I had no reason to believe that my persuasion would have any effect on the Commissioner, who was, I knew, desperate for these supplies and who seemed, from this latest move of his, to have tired of the browsing cow of diplomacy which had already taken six months to get him nowhere. Seemingly a clash was inevitable. *Que faire?* It may have occurred to you that, since the difficulty lay in the passage of Chinese troops through Tibetan territory, a solution might have been found in having the supplies brought through by a merchant caravan, but, unhappily, that was impossible, for every band of outlaws in Eastern Tibet, to say nothing of adventurous amateurs, would have made a bee-line for such a dainty morsel as twelve hundred rifles and many thousands of rounds of ammunition, with money to boot. Then why not have the consignment escorted through Tibetan territory by Tibetan troops? Exactly. That was a card Kalon Lama had up his sleeve but had not time to produce, the situation

in its final stages moving too rapidly for him. And anyway I doubt the Commissioner would have agreed to it, would have consented to entrust his precious supplies to anyone at all, especially in view of the sad fate of the first consignment.

Clearly there was nothing to be done. I continued my journey, and in due course was back at Chamdo, where I found the Kalon Lama prostrate with his gout, if it was gout. He was as composed as ever though now in constant pain, the sciatic nerve being, it would appear, involved. Nevertheless, and in spite of my protests he insisted on rising from his couch to receive me, and when I made the usual sympathetic inquiries he answered as briefly as possible and hurried on to other matters, feeling, it was obvious, the distaste of sympathy common to men of forceful character. Sick or well he was his same dominant self, his presence had lost none of its impressive dignity or his voice its tone of quiet authority. If illness is, as is often asserted, curable by ignoring it, he surely of all men should have recovered, and, indeed, he appeared to do so for he was able the next year to make the long journey on horse-back to Lhasa and back. It was only thereafter that he relapsed and died – in harness.

We plunged into discussion of the situation which had, just before my arrival, taken another, its final, turn. At the eleventh hour the Commissioner had abandoned his project of sending the convoy across the salient. While confident of his ability to force the passage if necessary, he was genuinely anxious to avoid if possible a clash on this, his western, border which could not but weaken his already precarious position *vis-à-vis* his rivals in the east. He realized from our letters that such a clash would inevitably ensue if he sent his convoy by the route proposed, which was held in strength by Tibetan troops. A way out of the difficulty presented itself through his delegates' discovery of an alternative route which ran for most of the way through the nomad lands of the independent Goloks and crossed the salient only in its extreme corner where, moreover, there were no Tibetan troops in occupation. Compared to the other this road or rather track had the great disadvantage that no supplies would be available *en route* and the convoy would be exposed all along to the attentions of the hardy Goloks, a congery of tribes notorious for their raiding propensities. On the other hand, no clash need occur with Tibet unless the Tibetan authorities moved up troops, that is, went out of their way to seek it, in which case, from the Commissioner's point of view, the responsibility for the renewal of hostilities would be theirs. It was rather thin, of course, but we must bear in mind that all this territory had been, a brief year before, part of his own domain and that he considered the Lhasa authorities to be in wrongful occupation of it. His change of route was in his eyes a compromise in the interests of peace, and the best he could do, there being no third route available. He was not prepared to argue the matter, but sent forward his convoy without further ado, warning the Kalon Lama to leave it alone. The convoy duly crossed the frontier, and the Tibetan Generals in the field petitioned the Kalon Lama for orders to move forward to the attack.

The Kalon Lama was in a quandary, his problem was upon him. It would have been much simpler for him if the Commissioner had stuck to his original plan. That matter had long since been referred to Lhasa and he had his orders to maintain his position *vi et armis*. But the present situation was entirely different. What action should he take? Whatever he did or did not do, he was accountable to Lhasa, and at Lhasa political opinion was divided into two main schools, the one, which we may term the modern or nationalist school, intolerant of the Chinese connection and in

favour of bringing the ethnological and political frontiers of Tibet together by force of arms, of recovering, that is, from China all Tibetan-inhabited territory still in her hands, and the other, the conservatives or reactionaries, anxious to put the clock back and to see the former relations of China and Tibet restored. From the point of view of this latter school Tibet was too weak to stand alone, and the Chinese connection presented itself to them in the light of a bulwark against the infiltration of European influence which they conceived to be subversive of the civilization of their country. In fact they regarded our ideas of life much in the light we regard Bolshevism.

These two schools, of which the army and the new officialdom generally was roughly the strong-hold of the one and the priesthood of the other, were of almost equal political influence, and policy swayed between them, the one or the other prevailing in this or that matter according as the sovereign threw his weight into this or that scale. The Kalon Lama, like his master, was identified with neither the one nor the other party.

The frontier crisis which had now materialized could not but present itself to the extremists of the first school as a heaven-sent opportunity to recover the unredeemed territories. Chinese troops had crossed the frontier, a *casus belli* had arisen unsought by the Tibetans, thrust upon them by the Commissioner's action. The chance must not be lost. They looked to the Kalon Lama to do what they conceived to be his duty, and the opposition, of course, was prepared to rend him if he construed his duty in that light. It was even deeper than just that. Such a clear-cut issue is hardly the rule in Oriental politics. What if it should suit some powerful clique in the one party or in the other that, he should do the very opposite to what their policy seemed to demand? There would be repercussions, he would be judged by results. Suppose, for instance, he took the heaven-sent opportunity to push forward the frontier, and China, stung at last to vigorous action, recoiled in force and re-established herself in Tibet? Or suppose he refrained, and fell from power to make way for ambition?

A pretty fix altogether. Whatever he did the storm would break over him. Even if there had been time enough, he could not in any event have divested himself of the responsibility and thrown it on to his sovereign in a matter so bound up with odium and faction as this. At the most he might have privately discovered His Holiness's wishes and carried them out, bearing the brunt himself. As it was he had not even this prop.

What *ought* he to do? As a Buddhist priest he was, on principle, opposed to war, but that did not prevent him waging it when it was thrust upon him. It was he who had commanded the Tibetan armies in the successful campaign of 1917-18. He had done his best to avoid those hostilities but the Chinese General concerned instigated by a Tibetan prelate of the pro-Chinese party, had repelled his overtures of peace, and believing that he had only to advance to find widespread support amongst the Tibetans themselves opened his campaign to restore the Chinese position in Tibet.

On that occasion hostilities were forced upon the Kalon Lama, but was that the case now? Surely there was no parallel between the two cases? A few weeks at most and the Commissioner's convoy would have gone and everything would be once more as it was, always excepting, of course, the opportunity lost. Was he justified in plunging the frontier into hostilities, in bringing upon the people all the horrors of war, in casting the Tibetan question once more into the melting pot, just for that? He came to the conclusion that he was not, but decided, before committing himself irrevocably,

to see in what light I regarded the matter. I was the local representative of the third party to the Tibetan question and I would be able, in my detached position, to give an opinion independent of all considerations alien to the strict merits of the case. I had not at that moment yet got back from my trip south, but I was due in a few days. He withstood the pressure of his entourage and provisionally instructed his commanders in the field to take no action pending further orders which would shortly be forthcoming.

He put the matter to me immediately I arrived and I told him I thought the convoy should be ignored. He was greatly relieved to find my opinion was identical with his own, confirmed his provisional orders, and the incident dissolved itself in peace, to the infinite relief of the people of Eastern Tibet.

It was afterwards asserted that I was responsible for the whole thing, that I had over-ruled the Kalon Lama and prevented him from taking the opportunity the *casus belli* afforded, but this reading of the situation reveals an entire misconception both of the Kalon Lama's character and of the nature of my position. The Kalon Lama was not an easy man to move, nor had I any concrete authority in the matter at all. My position on the frontier was simply that of a neutral, friendly alike to the Chinese and to Tibetan authorities, somebody they could consult or use as a channel of communication if they so desired; but there was no obligation whatsoever, official or moral, on the Kalon Lama or the Commissioner to take my advice in anything all. In brief, I was simply a political convenience, representing the intangible spirit of mediation, of which they could avail themselves if they chose.

My advice, however, in this particular case did in fact dominate the situation; for, as it afterwards transpired, had my opinion been in favour of military action or even if I had refused to give an opinion at all, the Kalon Lama would not have been able to withstand the pressure to which he was subjected, but when he found that I was in favour of peace he was able to remove that pressure and at the same time to divest himself, by shifting it on to me, of the responsibility for the course of action he desired to follow. It a master-stroke of policy which extricated him from a quagmire without putting anyone else into it, for I was presumably beyond the reach of political factions.

But did it extricate him? It was not long before the storm broke, and after a visit to Lhasa he passed, as I have said, from the scene. "Poison," said the people. If it was, the only explanation I can think of is that he was so firmly fixed in his sovereign's esteem that his enemies, whoever they were, concluded that death alone could remove him from power. "It was not poison," said a Tibetan notable to me, "but occult influence." Magic – I had heard of cases of it and of the process, the long incantations through which fiends are invoked and set to work upon an objective. It takes some doing, of course, and as often as not the spirits refuse to come from the vasty deep at the theurgist's call, but once they come they must have a living organism to obsess and the only hope of the unfortunate objective is, by suitable counter-incantations, to deflect them from himself into his live-stock, an equally laborious and uncertain process. "Surely," I replied, "Heaven could have protected his servant?" "Not if his course was run," was his answer, and I thought of the death of another of the divine ruler's lieutenants, shot through a tent-flap at a banquet. "I have had," he went on to say, "ten thousand prayers said for you in the lamasery." I could not quite see why I should be involved, but thanked him and added that if my course was run the

incantations were, according to what he had just said useless, and if it was not, presumably the demons could not make it so, to which he replied that curse was not necessarily concerned solely with death. His prayers on my behalf were generally considered to have been effective, for during the next few months I had a remarkable series of unexpected casualties; amongst my live-stock, losing no less than two cows, a pony, two bear-cubs, a wolf-cub, a dog and a number of rabbits and chickens, and what explanation more logical than that they absorbed the fiends intended for me? I cannot say that I rejoiced particularly in this happy outcome; on the other hand I have sometimes found myself wondering if a fiend or two didn't perhaps get left behind after all.

It seems to me very doubtful that anybody ever went to the trouble of laying a curse on me, but that one was laid on the Commissioner and his delegates would appear to be indisputable, a prophecy coming through a famous oracle that within three years all three of them would be dead. One of them, the King of Chala, died within the year in tragic circumstances, as I have related in my portrait of him; and the people confidently expected him to be followed by the other two, one each year. They bore, however, the sentence of death with complete composure, and survived. "The talk of children," the Commissioner said to me with his grim staccato laugh; and, thinking of the hundreds of men he had sent to a violent death, I felt he had quite a basis for his confidence. Surely if the spirits had any power he would have been dead long ago. There would, indeed, appear to be a sad flaw somewhere in this theurgy business but, to be honest with the persons who believe in these things, I may as well say that of the five of us concerned in this incident two are dead and the other three prematurely out of office.

EMPIRE AND THE STATUS OF TIBET

British, Chinese, and Tibetan negotiations, 1913–1934¹

Carole McGranahan

Source: previously unpublished.

dbyin ji ni rgya bod dbar gyi bar gyi mi dang mtshams kyi rdo de yin pa red
Britain was a boundary stone, the mediator between Tibet and China.²

In 1907, Lord Curzon delivered a lecture on “Frontiers” in the Sheldonian Theatre in Oxford. One passage in his lecture would continue to haunt Tibet into the present-day: “Frontiers are indeed the razor’s edge on which hang suspended the modern issues of war or peace, or life or death to nations. . . . [T]he integrity of her borders is the condition of existence of the state.”³ In many ways, Curzon was the chief architect of British policy towards Tibet, a policy that from 1913 on was focused on establishing the political status of Tibet vis-à-vis both India and China.⁴ For British agents of empire, determining the status of Tibet required determining the boundaries of Tibet. However, converting Tibetan frontiers into modern discrete boundaries was not an easy task. Persistent British efforts from 1913 through 1934 to realize a tripartite agreement regarding Tibet with the Tibetan and Chinese governments were ultimately unsuccessful.⁵ The one issue that consistently impeded the passing of any treaty was the delineation of the eastern border between Tibet and China.

In this article, I consider this inability to determine the boundaries of Tibet as a problem composed of cultural, historical, and political factors. Key to my inquiry is the recognition that state organization has never been consistent over time or place. Instead, around the world we find multiple and changing ways to organize peoples and places under the banner of an overarching community.⁶ The twentieth century, therefore, is notable in its departure from this multiplicity of state forms. Since roughly the end of World War II and subsequent European decolonization, the world has been transformed into a system of nation-states prominently represented by the United Nations. This new system allows for different types of governments, but assesses them all as modern nation-states regardless of their actual composition. Although currently billed as universal and even natural, the modern nation-state was created out of European historical conditions, and interpreted and implemented differently around the world.⁷ At the time of the People’s Republic of China’s invasion of Tibet, neither the boundaries nor the political status of Tibet were settled in modern terms. This

does not mean, however, that Tibet did not exist as a state; rather, like many territories outside of Europe, its means of state organization operated under different principles and organizational strategies.

Based in Lhasa, the Tibetan state functioned under a set of rules that combined religious and secular authority, centralized and decentralized administration, ritual and performative aspects of allegiance, and allowed for high degrees of autonomy for certain areas within its sphere of influence.⁸ Outside of Lhasa, the Tibetan Government was represented in a variety of manners. In most, but not all of Central Tibet, aristocratic and monastic leaders from Lhasa governed estates and the laborers attached to them. In other parts of Tibet, such as Kham, such an estate system did not exist.⁹ Instead, affairs in Kham were mostly under the local control of hereditary kings, chiefs, and lamas, some of who belonged to lineages initially appointed by the Fifth Dalai Lama. Structures and dynamics of state-local relations were not consistent throughout Tibet, but varied in different areas as well as over time. In 1913, there was no modern boundary between Tibet and China; instead there were overlapping zones, open zones, and locally governed territories, both lay and monastic. Thus, the modern belief that hard boundaries were necessary to determine where one country ended and another began was not in operation on the Tibetan borderlands. As a result, politics and territory did not link the Tibetan nation and state together in the manner required by newly hegemonic nineteenth century European models of the nation-state.

Tibetan systems of state organization differed from modern European systems in five significant ways: first, boundaries were determined and sanctioned locally, rather than by central authorities; second, sovereignty and boundary were not coterminous; third, buffer zones and overlapping zones between polities were allowed; fourth, external ratification of rule was not required; and fifth, the sphere of a realm was defined not by territorial integrity, but by power relationships of allegiance between territory and center.¹⁰ Therefore, the “absence of definite boundaries” of premodern Tibet is not due to “some practical or technical reason,” but is evidence of a different set of concepts of geopolitical space than those associated with the modern nation-state.¹¹ At present, however, the twentieth century partitioning of Tibet has foreclosed on the possibility of recognizing such earlier systems of Tibetan state formations as either viable or legitimate in the present.

In order to better understand contemporary Tibetan politics and community, this article details British attempts in the early 20th century to bring Tibet into geopolitical alignment with the changing world. First, I examine the boundary disputes in Simla during the 1913–1914 convention; second, present the second round of negotiations in Chamdo and Rongbatsa in 1918; third, consider British efforts from 1919 through 1934 to settle the eastern Tibetan boundary; and finally, discuss the impact of these boundary disputes on how Tibet is understood in the present. The legacy of the disputes is evident in the predominant models of Tibet at present, the *colonial* and *united* models, both of which deal with the application of modern statemaking principles to pre-1950s Tibet in a different manner. In the last section of the article, I discuss these two models and suggest a third model, the *contested* model, that takes into account the continuing dispute over the status and boundaries of Tibet. While the era of the modern nation-state may have begun its decline, it nonetheless remains a prevailing influence in both internal and external views of and debates about Tibet.

Swallowing a living person: the Simla Tripartite Conference, 1913–1914

The entire proceedings of the Simla Conference were derailed by the question of the boundary between Tibet and China. Held in Simla and Delhi from October 1913 to July 1914, the Tripartite Conference was a British-orchestrated attempt to draft a treaty between Great Britain, China, and Tibet.¹² Delegates from each country participated as equals—for India, Sir Henry McMahon, Secretary in the British Government of India; for China, Mr. Ivan Chen (Chen Yi-fan), the Special Commissioner for Foreign Affairs in Shanghai who had earlier been posted to London; and for Tibet, Lonchen Shatra Paljor Dorje (blon chen bshad sgra dpal 'byor rdo rje), the Prime Minister of Tibet. These three plenipotentiaries discussed and debated issues ranging from the political status of Tibet, trade, the posting of British and Chinese representatives of Tibet, and the borders of Tibet. After six months, a treaty draft was initialed by all three plenipotentiaries and sent to their respective governments for final approval. Great Britain and Tibet approved the draft agreement, but China did not. In protest over the boundary arrangement, the Chinese Government ordered Ivan Chen not to sign. Sir Henry McMahon and Lonchen Shatra signed the final agreement on July 3, 1914.

Chen's missing signature notwithstanding, the Simla Convention and Treaty are important for a number of reasons, including the fact that the negotiations were tripartite, with China, Tibet, and Britain participating as equals. Following the fall of the Qing Dynasty in 1911, the Tibetans re-established their independent government, having driven from the country the Chinese Amban, who was resident in Lhasa as representative of the Chinese Emperor.¹³ Tibetan participation in the conference was significant, especially since the discussions were originally to have been between just India and China. The impetus for the Simla Convention was the British discovery during the summer of 1912 that the Chinese were making plans to invade Tibet. The Tibetan Government had already dispatched troops to eastern Tibet to ward off Chinese attackers from Sichuan and Yunnan. In light of both the frontier situation and Yuan Shih-kai's Presidential Order of April 21, 1912 declaring Tibet to be considered and administered as a province of China, the British Government in India decided that the situation required action, and the Foreign Office in England agreed.

On August 17, 1912 the British Legation in Peking presented a Memorandum to the Chinese Government, stating that while His Majesty's Government recognized China's "suzerain rights" in Tibet, they did not and would not recognize China's right to interfere in Tibet's internal administration or to keep an unlimited number of troops there.¹⁴ Several months of letters and meetings later, in January 1913, the Chinese Government agreed to negotiate with the British on the subject of Tibet. They proposed, however, to settle things first with the Tibetans, and then negotiate with the British. They repeatedly objected to tripartite negotiations on the ground that the Chinese and Tibetans were not equal, and that the Chinese delegate needed to be saved from "the indignity of having to sit at the Conference table as the mere equal of a Tibetan."¹⁵

The 1912 Presidential Order regarding Tibet was finally revoked on June 30, 1913 and the Chinese Government consented to tripartite negotiations. With this Sino-Indian agreement in hand, official plans for the conference began. Each side began to prepare their proposals and participants began their long journeys to Simla.

In England, British goals for the conference were explicitly stated as two-fold—first, to secure the maintenance of peace and order on the Indo-Tibetan border, and second, to ensure that the controlling influence at Lhasa was not overtly hostile to India or the frontier states.¹⁶ The plan for reaching these goals was simple: the British would entertain the proposals from both the Tibetans and Chinese, until a “suitable opportunity [arose] to produce our own proposals as offering a reasonable compromise between the two extreme views.”¹⁷

In Simla, the question of where Tibet ended and where China began became the most debated issue of the conference. The Chinese claimed a large portion of Tibet as being part of China—from the town of Gyamda, close to Lhasa, and all the territory east of it. The Tibetans, on the other hand, claimed Tibetan-inhabited territories, including several controlled by the Chinese up to and including the border town of Dartsendo. Thirty-six territories were in dispute, mostly in the eastern Tibetan province of Kham. From October to December 1913, no progress was made on the issue of the disputed territories. On December 19, it was decided that both the Tibetan and Chinese representatives should prepare cases supporting their territorial claims. They would present these cases to the British representative, who would consider each and come to a conclusion regarding the border. On January 12, 1914, the conference resumed with Lonchen Shatra and Ivan Chen presenting two very different cases.¹⁸

The Tibetan case was enormous—hundreds of pages of original Tibetan documents, along with a general statement about the boundary. In comparison, the Chinese case consisted of their general statement and one lone appendix. Whereas the Tibetans’ case was built on historical evidence, the Chinese case rested on the claim of “effective occupation.” It was the claimed reality of the past versus the claimed reality of the present, and both sides were relying on the British to decide in their favor. The British, however, had other plans. They were not merely judging the two cases before them, but preparing their own eastern Tibet boundary proposal. In true Great Game fashion, the British Government was not only concerned with establishing the border between India and Tibet, but in quelling the interests and influences of others in Tibet. Russia was no longer a vital threat, and with the demise of the Qing Dynasty, the British jumped at the opportunity to prevent the new Chinese regime from gaining influence in Tibet.¹⁹ They were not satisfied with retaining Tibet as a buffer state between India and China, but wanted to create a second buffer zone between Tibet and China.

The Tibetan Government’s claims to the disputed territories consisted of three parts: first, historical evidence demonstrating that these territories were Tibetan territories; second, evidence showing that a 1000 year-old boundary between Tibet and China already existed; and third, a refutation of the Chinese claims. The Chinese Government’s case, on the other hand, made the simple claim that the territories under dispute were Chinese ones. In support of its case, the Chinese Government submitted one document: a bill passed by the House of Senators in the Chinese National Assembly which stated that several of the disputed Tibetan territories had been given Chinese names and converted into the 8th Division of the Sichuan Parliamentary election districts. In stark contrast to this *one* Chinese document were the *ninety* documents submitted by the Tibetan Government in support of their case. The Tibetan documents included inscriptions of boundary pillars, census reports, tax and revenue records, extracts from written histories, registers of legal cases, lists of official appointments, monastic records, bonds of allegiance between territories and

the Tibetan Government, and correspondence between the Chinese and Tibetan Governments regarding certain territories.

Tibetan Government claims dated back to the 7th century with King Songtsen Gampo, but really began with the erection of the first boundary markers between Tibet and China during the 9th century in the reign of King Nga dag Tri ral. The eastern boundary was marked by chorten karmo, a white stupa, near Yachao in Sichuan.²⁰ The inscriptions on the pillars clearly stated that west of the boundary markers was Tibet and east was China, reading that "Tibetans shall rest secure in Tibet, [and] Chinese shall rest secure in China."²¹ Their claim next jumps 700 years to the 17th century. Following the suppression of an internal revolt, the 5th Dalai Lama reconstituted the Tibetan territory, sending officers to the eastern territories right up to Dartsendo. These officers conducted censuses, collected all sorts of financial information from households and monasteries, and facilitated the appointing of leaders from Lhasa to the various eastern territories. These appointees were later made into hereditary chiefs, who had an allegiance to the Tibetan Government, but autonomy in their local affairs. This status quo held for two hundred years until one of the ruling families of Nyarong attacked and brutally conquered its neighboring territories.²² In 1865, at the request of local chieftains, the Tibetan Army intervened, defeated the rebel group of Nyarongbas, and restored peace all the way east to Dartsendo. As a punishment, the territory of Nyarong was placed under the direct authority of Lhasa. Neighboring provinces were restored to their former status, but with a new set of obligations binding them to the Tibetan Government. Thirty years later, in 1895, troops from Sichuan attacked Nyarong. The Tibetan Government sent a mission to Peking to protest to the Emperor. Their protest was successful—in 1898, the Emperor ordered that Nyarong be restored to Tibet. The original sealed letter with the Emperor's order was included in the Tibetan's roster of evidence.

The bulk of the Tibetan claims up to 1904 were composed of evidence-backed narrative. The remainder of their case is a response to the Chinese claims. In contrast to the Tibetan claims, the Chinese claims were based entirely on narrative arguments, as follows: first, that the disputed territories had a "historic connection" with China, and, second, that the Chinese currently had "effective occupation" of these territories. The Chinese stated that the Qianlong Emperor formally annexed Tibet in 1720, and that since then "Tibet has been under Chinese sovereignty and the whole of Tibet cannot be otherwise considered than Chinese territory."²³ The border between China and Tibet is marked by a boundary stone in Bathang at the Ningching Shan mountain range [Tib. Bum La (pass)]. The Chinese case then proceeds to divide the disputed territories into two groups—those that are "Chinese" and those that were brought under China by Zhao Erfeng (Chao Erh-feng). In 1905, while en route to Lhasa, the Chinese Amban was murdered in Bathang. Zhao Erfeng, the Viceroy of Sichuan and later Imperial Commissioner for the Border, led a retributive mission to Bathang.²⁴ By 1909, the native chiefs tendered their submission to him, and in 1910 he signed an agreement with the Tibetan Government that the boundary between China and Tibet would now be Gyamda, just east of Lhasa. This settlement was sanctioned by Imperial rescript by Emperor Hsuan Tung, and the current Chinese Government held that the frontier of Sichuan was still Gyamda. Thus, in addition to the claim of "effective occupation," the Chinese claim was based on Qing Dynasty relations with Tibet reclaimed by the new Chinese Republic.

The Tibetan story of Zhao Erfeng differs. Starting not with the murder of the Chinese Amban, but with Zhao's murder of three Tibetan Government officials in eastern Tibet, the Tibetan Government submits an indignant reply to the Chinese territorial claims. Zhao Erfeng, they claimed, was a bloodthirsty adventurer who destroyed monasteries and villages, and through terror and violence forced many Tibetan territories to submit to him. Fully expecting the Chinese Government to disavow Zhao's rampages in eastern Tibet, they sent a protest mission to Beijing, where, to their surprise, the Chinese Government supported Zhao. When the Qing Dynasty fell, the Tibetans in Kham, U, and Tsang provinces "rose as one man and drove the Chinese out of Tibet back into their own country."²⁵ The invitation to the Simla negotiations came when Tibet was the stronger military power in the east, yet the Tibetan Government agreed to stop its advances and to rely on the strength of their case at the diplomatic table—"on the truth and justice of their cause."²⁶ From a Tibetan point of view, Zhao's acquisitions could not be considered legal or even plausible:

If unauthorized and unjustifiable acts of encroachment have to be accepted and recognized as conquest, it would be an instance of international encouragement to similar lawless acts. It would be like a murderer and a robber being allowed to enjoy his booty and remain unpunished, in a country which boasts of having law and justice. . . . The Chinese Government are surely fully aware of the fact, that Chao Erh Feng had been guilty of such glaring misdeeds and that even if he had a hundred lives he should forfeit every one of them to the law. But instead of owning the truth they descend so low as to base their claim on his raids as conquests and call it incontrovertible proof of just claim. It is like trying to swallow a living person—an impossible feat—which no one can be asked to believe.²⁷

Thus, with the two cases and their respective passions and conceits before him, Sir Henry McMahon began his review of the claims. Retrospect has taught us that in many ways European empire was a project of knowledge as much as one of rule.²⁸ In this case beyond the reach of empire, this project failed.

Imperial statemaking at Simla: British assessments of the Tibetan-Chinese border

British colonial administrators had mapped, measured, counted, and studied lands and peoples throughout India,²⁹ and had even sent Bengalis dressed as Tibetan monks to map southern and central Tibet,³⁰ but they knew very little about Kham, Tibet's eastern province. British officers in India had primary responsibility for Tibet, and had been engaged in diplomatic and trade relations with Tibet since the late eighteenth century when Warren Hastings deputed George Bogle on the first British mission to Tibet. British officials in China, on the other hand, had little to no relations with Tibet until they sent intelligence officer Louis King to the Tibetan frontier to gather information and keep watch over the Chinese troops.³¹ King arrived in Dartsendo in late October 1913, just after the start of the Simla Conference. Handicapped by his late arrival, lack of prior British intelligence work in the area, and the fact that he spoke only Chinese, King was nonetheless able to gather some useful information.

Early in his stay on the frontier, King determined that official Chinese military reports about the frontier were conflicting and unreliable. A number of Chinese troops had mutinied, existing forces were split into three unfriendly factions, and although the Chinese troops were indeed present in certain territories, they were weak, penniless, and without government support. Were it not for Tibetan adherence to the Simla ceasefire, King asserted, the Tibetan Army would have easily occupied all of eastern Tibet up to Dartsendo. In effect, China's claim of "effective occupation" was practically null and void. King spent most of his time in Dartsendo, traveling to only two other Tibetan territories to gather information to send to Simla. Local Chinese magistrates facilitated his journeys to Kanze and Nyarong and hosted him in each district. Through discussions with these officials he determined that Chinese control in these territories was fragile, and that the local Tibetans would prefer rule by their own leaders than direct control by either Chinese officials or Tibetan governors. Despite his efforts, King was not able to fully penetrate the Lhasa-centric knowledge base of officials in British India. The Kanze and Nyarong reports that King submitted to Beijing via Chengdu in January 1914 did not arrive in India until two months later, on March 26th, a full five weeks after McMahon had presented the British boundary proposal.³²

The British were not relying solely on King or other British intelligence officers to provide information with which to evaluate the Tibetan and Chinese claims. They turned to an unexpected source, a Chinese book published in Chengdu in 1912. This book was *The History of the Creation of Hsikang Province* written by Fu Sung Mu, Imperial Commissioner for Sichuan and Yunnan Frontier Affairs under Zhao Erfeng. This was the main source the British used to check the claims for the border territories. British notes from the book reveal a different set of Chinese claims—that, first on passing Dartsendo, one speaks of "entering Tibet;" second, that Chinese travelers call the Ching-ning mountain range west of Bathang the boundary between China and Tibet; and third, of those territories east of Bathang, "some . . . were really quite independent of China."³³ Fu also wrote that the territories of Bathang, Lithang, Derge, and Chamdo were under their native chiefs or monastic leaders, that Nyarong, Dragyab, and Dzayul were under the Tibetan Government, and that Shobando, Riwoche, and Markham had been ceded to Tibet by the Manchu Emperor between 1724–27. He also stated—in direct contrast to the Chinese claims at Simla—that the Chinese "had no right of interference in the secular administration of these territories" as was introduced forcibly [by Zhao Erfeng] without the consent of the Tibetans.³⁴ Armed with such various sources of information, the British drafted their proposal.

Two months after Lonchen Shatra and Ivan Chen had presented their cases, Sir Henry McMahon presented the secret British plan, calling it a *non-negotiable compromise* between the Tibetan and Chinese proposals. The plan included a radical change, the division of Tibet into two zones, Inner Tibet and Outer Tibet. "Inner" Tibet was to serve as a buffer zone between China and Tibet, but was "not to be transformed into a Chinese province" nor was the "local autonomy of the Chiefs . . . to be interfered with."³⁵ This much the British established without difficulty; the question, however, of which territories were to be assigned to Inner Tibet was occasion for great debate between British officials in England, India, and China.

The British agreed with Lonchen Shatra about the historical limits of Tibet, but nonetheless wanted to make some overtures to the Chinese in the form of Tibetan territory. They were therefore disturbed that the Chinese claims did not include factual

evidence to support their claims, including no information that would support Chinese claims to suzerainty in Tibet. For political reasons, they nonetheless decided to assign Markham, Dragyab, and Chamdo to Outer Tibet, and to place Jyekundo, Atuntze, Bathang, Lithang and Dartsendo in Inner Tibet. Many of the British officials who participated in the Simla discussions from afar supported assigning Nyarong, Derge and the Hor States to Outer Tibet. Despite, however, a general British agreement that these territories should be within the sphere of the Lhasa Tibetan Government, a last minute decision was made to appease the Chinese, and Nyarong, Derge, and the Hor States were placed in Inner Tibet, rather than Outer Tibet. No territories were assigned to China proper. The divide between Inner and Outer Tibet was to be the boundary pillar at Bathang. The boundary did not quite follow the Dri Chu [Yangtze River] but was close to it. The boundary settlement became Article Nine of the proposed treaty. It read:

Article 9. For the purpose of present convention the borders of Tibet and the boundary between Outer and Inner Tibet shall be as shown in red and blue, respectively on the map attached hereto. Nothing in the present convention shall be held to prejudice the existing rights of the Tibetan Government in Inner Tibet, which include the power to select and appoint the high priests of monasteries, and to retain full control in all manners affecting religious institutions.

On April 27, 1914, all three Plenipotentiaries initialed the Tripartite Convention. Neither the Tibetan nor the Chinese Government was happy with the terms of the treaty. The Tibetan Government, considering itself bound by Lonchen Shatra's initialing, authorized him to sign the final draft. The Chinese Government, however, ordered Ivan Chen not to sign the final draft. They explained this decision as expressly related to the boundary: "This Government has several times stated that it gives its support to the majority of the articles of the Convention. The part which it is unable to agree to is that dealing with the question of the boundary."³⁶ On July 3, 1914, Sir Henry McMahon and Lonchen Shatra signed the final treaty on behalf of the British and the Tibetan Governments. The tripartite agreement was now a bipartite agreement, one that the British and Tibetan Governments considered binding between themselves, and to which China forfeited all rights. The Chinese Government stated that they would not recognize the Simla Treaty.

The Simla negotiations did not end as planned. The British and Tibetans adhered to the terms of the convention in theory and practice, right up until the invasion and subsequent occupation of Tibet by the People's Republic of China in 1950. India's inheritance of British colonial treaties included the Simla Convention and China's protests against it; in 1962, disputes over the "McMahon Line," the disputed southern Tibetan boundary between India and China turned into full-fledged war, and persist today as a highly charged conflict between the two states. On Tibet's eastern border, however, not much changed at first. The terms of Article Nine were never implemented, for although the Tibetan Government accepted the Inner and Outer Tibet distinction, the Chinese did not. Frontier territories remained under a mix of Tibetan, Chinese, and local administration. Minor border skirmishes continued. Hopes for a second tripartite convention were derailed by unrest in China, by World War I, and by declining British power in Asia. And then, in 1918, in Chamdo, another opportunity to settle the boundary arose.

The 1918 Chamdo and Rongbatsa agreements

For several days in the summer of 1918, there was feasting and theatrical performances in Chamdo. Just west of the Dri Chu river, the Tibetan town of Chamdo was the seat of the Tibetan Government's civil and military authority. Conditions in Kham were still mostly unsettled, but as in 1912, the Tibetan Army was the current strength in the region and was in the process of restoring lost territories to Lhasa. Fresh from British-sponsored training, and carrying weapons provided by the Government of India, the Tibetan Army now approximated a modern army. Seeking to back their military gains with a diplomatic agreement, the Tibetan Government agreed to negotiations for a provisional boundary settlement with China and Great Britain. Held in Chamdo, both the negotiations and the festivities preceding them were hosted by the Tibetan Government representative, the Kalon Lama Chamba Tendar.

The Chamdo meeting did not mark the first post-Simla attempt to settle the boundary. In consultation with both the Tibetan and Chinese Governments, the British Government continued to plan for a second round of tripartite negotiations. On June 28, 1915, Yuan Shi-kai submitted a Tibet proposal to the British Legation; the British rejected the proposal as well as subsequent Chinese amendments to it.³⁷ On the frontier itself, both the Tibetans and Chinese put forward plans for a boundary settlement, but neither ever came close to accepting the other's proposals.³⁸ The continuing gap between the territorial claims of each was in part a product of vastly different historical memories. The Chinese insisted on a return to the boundary established by Zhao Erfeng, and referred to this area as a "Special Territory of the Szechuan Frontier." The Tibetans reached back to pre-Zhao days and pressed for the implementation of the Simla boundary, specifically for a Chinese evacuation from the territories of Chamdo, Dragyab, Markham, Derge and Nyarong. Following the collapse of the Simla negotiations, hopes for a diplomatically reached boundary were replaced by faith in a militarily secured frontier. Local Khampa troops and Tibetan Army troops fought battles against mostly Sichuanese Chinese troops throughout the frontier. It was not until January 1918, however, that the stakes were raised. This was when Chinese General Peng Jih-sheng launched a strike against Chamdo.

At this time, China was in a period of upheaval. The new regime was still getting organized and Sichuan province was in a particularly disturbed state.³⁹ General Peng's troops had not received any supplies for two years. Seeking to rectify this situation and to perhaps simultaneously increase his own regional power, Peng launched his attack. His troops were defeated in a three month long battle against troops led by the Tibetan General Tsogo. Three hundred of Peng's 800 soldiers died, many deserted, and the remaining 300–400 soldiers were marched off to Central Tibet as prisoners of war.⁴⁰ The emboldened Tibetan Army continued to march east, approaching Bathang and Lithang, with hopes of advancing past these territories to Dartsendo itself. Following Louis King's initial excursion to the Tibetan borderlands, the British Legation appointed a permanent agent to the frontier in the position of "Vice-Consul at Tachienlu" (Dartsendo). In 1918, Eric Teichman, who would go on to a long and distinguished career in the Chinese Consular Service, held the post.⁴¹

While the Tibetan troops advanced east, General Liu Tsan-ting, the Chinese Magistrate at Bathang, asked Eric Teichman to mediate a ceasefire and settlement with the Tibetans.⁴² Traveling to Bathang, and employing the services of fast couriers

who could travel to Chamdo in a mere ten days, Teichman arranged a plan for peaceful negotiations with the Kalon Lama. Just short of Bathang, the Tibetan Army halted their advance. Under the theory that the Chinese would be more conciliatory and likely to sign an agreement if they were in Tibet rather than in Chinese-controlled territory, Teichman decided that the negotiations were to be in Chamdo. Ceasefire established and negotiations planned, Teichman and Liu hastened to Chamdo. While awaiting permission from their respective governments to proceed with the negotiations, the trio began their own preparations. Teichman coordinated all communication between the Kalon Lama and General Liu, allowing only one official visit between the two at which General Liu presented the Kalon Lama with numerous presents, including five loads of tea, a pair of Chinese boots, and some pearls.⁴³ Despite the tripartite nature of the gathering, both General Liu and the Kalon Lama expected that the negotiations were really between just two parties, themselves and Teichman:

General Liu's original idea of the course of our negotiations was that he should harangue the Kalon Lama into an agreement, which I [Teichman] should then be called into witness; and he was somewhat surprised to find that he was not to be allowed to see the Kalon Lama at all except in my presence, and even then was not to be permitted to discuss anything of importance until the negotiations had reached an advanced stage; the Kalon Lama's idea on the subject being that he and I should first discuss a satisfactory settlement and then present it to Liu for acceptance.⁴⁴

By the end of July, the Tibetan and British Governments had approved the negotiations, but General Liu never received permission from the Chinese Government.⁴⁵ Undeterred, the trio decided to proceed with the negotiations anyway.

On August 11, 1918, the negotiations commenced. Teichman opened by pointing out two things: first, that it was imperative that General Liu make it clear to the Chinese Government that if they did not ratify any agreement signed in Chamdo, that the Tibetans would have no recourse but to continue their advances on Bathang; and second, that these negotiations were for a provisional peace between the Chinese and Tibetans until the three governments could arrange a permanent settlement.⁴⁶ The Kalon Lama and General Liu then presented their statements. Both were concerned primarily with establishing the limits of their territory. The Kalon Lama said that considering the strength of the Tibetans, the provisional boundary should be drawn at Dartsendo. General Liu suggested the Bum La line, following the boundary marker in Bathang, and that in the north the boundary should be at the Dri Chu. He added that China's current weakness was sure to be remedied soon, at which point the Chinese would probably drive the Tibetans all the way back to Lhasa. "Heated remarks" were then exchanged between Liu and the Kalon Lama, and Teichman stepped in to take control.

His arbitration was swift and binding. As drafted by Teichman, the Chamdo Agreement included provisions for troop withdrawals and allowances, prisoner exchange, amnesty for Chinese and Tibetan expatriates, and laid down strict guidelines for the operations of armed troops and police units along the frontier. Additionally, the Chinese were not to abuse the monks of Dargye monastery for their aid to the Tibetan Army. Tibetan monasteries under China would be administered by Tibet

without Chinese interference, and Tibetan lamas there were not to interfere with “the territorial authority of Chinese officials.” Article Three delineated the provisional boundary. Teichman proposed that both sides keep the territories they currently occupied. The Tibetans received Chamdo, Dragyab, Markham, Derge, Riwoche, Ngenda, Gonjo, Sangen, Tungpu, Tengko, Seshu and Beyu. The Chinese received Tsakalo, Bathang, Lithang, Chatreng, Kanze, the Hor States, Nyarong, Dasho, Derong, Drango, Tawu, Nyachuka, Chagsam, Jezerong and Tamdrin. This formulation was argued about for a while, but then accepted with “fairly good grace by both sides; for,” as Teichman wrote to Sir John Jordan, head of the British Legation in Beijing, “I had already spent weeks in arguing the matter out with each party separately.”⁴⁷ However, as in Simla, there was one issue that almost held up the negotiations.

Teichman had pushed for a Dri Chu boundary line, but conceded this issue to the “tenacious” Kalon Lama under the belief that as a representative of His Majesty’s Government it was his duty “to support the claims of the Tibetans as far as I am able to with any prospect of success.”⁴⁸ The Kalon Lama was not interested in the Dri Chu, but in Derge and Nyarong, and wanted both to be given to Tibet. Teichman refused to turn over Nyarong; and, in the end, the Kalon Lama was persuaded to sign the Chamdo agreement only after both Teichman and Liu wrote official letters stating that this was a temporary settlement, and that Nyarong would be an issue of discussion at the next tripartite conference. The Kalon Lama’s insistence that Nyarong fall to Tibet was not an instance of political posturing. The Tibetan Government believed that under the Simla Agreement they had jurisdiction in Derge and Nyarong via Article Nine’s allowance for their “existing rights” in Inner Tibetan territories. The British, confused by Tibetan claims to Derge and Nyarong, attributed this belief to a problem with translation: the English phrase “which include” in Article Nine was translated into Tibetan as *lhag don* whose closer English rendition, a British officer suggested, was “moreover.”⁴⁹

This is not, however, a simple case of mistranslation, but one of historical interpretation. The Tibetan Government believed that Derge and Nyarong were civilly, militarily, and religiously under their stewardship, and more importantly, believed that they had proved this to be true in Simla. Substituting “moreover” for “which includes,” or vice versa, has no effect on the Tibetan interpretation of their rights in Inner Tibet. In contrast, the British separated the Tibetan Government’s political and religious relations with eastern Tibetan territories. The British were confused by political relations between Lhasa and many of the Khampa territories, whereas religious relations proved easier to understand and less controversial to accept. Thus, counter to much of the information in front of them, the British chose to view the Tibetan Government’s “existing rights” in Inner Tibet as solely religious, related to monastery administration and appointments. This allowed for what they saw as a compromise: Inner Tibet would be affiliated religiously with Tibet and politically with China. They backed this political decision with a clause in the Simla Convention that stated in the case of a dispute, the English-language version would be considered the correct version. However, the British interpretation is neither included nor implied in the text of Article Nine. The Tibetan Government interpretation of Article Nine—which by no means limited Tibetan Government authority to religious affairs—is therefore just as valid as the British interpretation. Using the cultural and political logic of the Tibetan system, Nyarong would fall in Outer Tibet, not Inner Tibet.

The ambiguity of Simla's Article Nine thus allowed the Tibetans and British their own interpretation of Tibetan rights in Inner Tibet. Inner Tibet, however, was not a reality as the terms of the Simla Agreement had not been implemented in eastern Tibet, and Teichman complained to Jordan that General Liu and other Chinese frontier officials knew "*little or nothing*" about the Simla negotiations.⁵⁰ The Chamdo Agreement did not mention the Inner and Outer Tibet divide, nor did Eric Teichman seek to adhere to the territorial assignments made in Simla. Anticipating a second tripartite conference, Teichman saw the Chamdo negotiations as an opportunity to set the frontier boundary to the Tibetans' advantage thus compelling the Chinese to either adhere to the 1914 Convention or to negotiate a new treaty from a weaker position.⁵¹ As with McMahon in Simla, Teichman viewed his role as a delicately political one, in which he must orchestrate things so that the Tibetans and Chinese feel that they—and not he—had directed the negotiations.⁵² On August 19, 1918, after eight days of negotiations, a thirteen point agreement was completed and signed by all three representatives. The agreement was to be effective upon acceptance by all three governments, and temporary until a "final and permanent" tripartite agreement could be reached. Future disputes were to be mediated by the British Consul.

Hostilities in Kham were soon resumed, and on October 10, 1918, a supplementary agreement was signed in Rongbatsa. The signatories were the Khenchung Lama, Khyungram Dapon, and Tethong Dapon on behalf of the Kalon Lama, and Han Kuang-chun and the King of Chagla for the Szechuan Frontier Commissioner. This four-article agreement was designed to end all hostilities and begin the process of troop withdrawal. As of October 17, Tibetan troops were to withdraw to Derge, and Chinese troops to Kanze. Troop withdrawal was to be completed by October 3. All fighting was to be halted for one year pending government approval of the Chamdo negotiations. Even with the Chamdo and Rongbatsa Agreements in hand, Teichman was not optimistic about the future of the borderlands. In his opinion, differences between the Tibetans and Chinese were not soon to be reconciled: "The Chinese profess to look down on the Tibetans and to treat them as naughty children; while the Tibetans have nowadays the most intense dislike and mistrust of the Chinese."⁵³ As with Chamdo, the Chinese Government did not respond to their agent's signing of the Rongbatsa Agreement, and would later disavow both agreements.

The Chinese refusal to accept the terms of the Chamdo Agreement and their continuing unwillingness to acknowledge Tibetan participation in these debates, was reminiscent of Simla. However, the Chamdo/Rongbatsa negotiations differed from the Simla meetings in important ways. For example, while Teichman played a mediation role similar to that played by McMahon in Simla, the entire negotiations were conducted without the benefit of any supporting staff or documentation. The negotiations instead represented restraint on behalf of the advancing Tibetan army and the desire of the Tibetans and the British to settle the border. Attempts by Teichman, Liu, and the Kalon Lama to involve their superiors in the discussions were mostly in vain; this does not, however, void the fact that these men were acting as representatives of their governments. Not all British officials agreed with Teichman's position, and strong opinions were offered as to whether the treaty settlement was too pro-Tibetan or too pro-Chinese. Unlike the Chinese government, however, the British and Tibetan governments accepted the Chamdo Agreement as they had the Simla

Agreement. His Majesty's Government christened the new boundary the "Teichman Line." The Tibetan government also recognized the agreement that brought Derge and other territories under their rule, and also included the provision that the Nyarong settlement was temporary. Upon accepting the Chamdo Agreement, the Tibetans pressed British officials for a permanent and tripartite boundary settlement. The British wasted no time in beginning work towards a settlement.

Imperial arm-wrestling: proposals, war, propaganda, and stalemates, 1919–1934

The next "conference" was in the form of bilateral and informal discussions between the British and Chinese. The British plan was to secure an agreement from China, and then present it to the Tibetans in the hopes that they could be persuaded to accept it.⁵⁴ The Chinese seemed amenable to this arrangement. On May 31st, 1919, the Chinese submitted to Sir John Jordan a boundary settlement proposal based on the Simla Agreement but with several changes.⁵⁵ The changes were: Gonjo was to be turned over to Outer Tibet; the Southern Kokonor territory was to be transferred to Inner Tibet,⁵⁶ and, Bathang, Lithang, and Dartsendo were to become a part of China proper. The British spent the next several months formulating their counter-proposal, which tentatively included abolishing Inner Tibet, with some territories going to Tibet and some to China. The British Foreign Office and the Chinese were both intrigued by this option, but Sir Charles Bell opined that the Tibetans would not go for it, especially seeing as though they had already rejected the initial Chinese proposal. Bell's argument was as follows: "the Tibetans really regard Inner Tibet—and have very good ethnological grounds for so doing—as by rights a part of Tibet, and probably will never be really satisfied until the boundaries of autonomous Tibet are extended to include it."⁵⁷ In the end, the British decided to negotiate with the Chinese on the basis of the original May 31 proposal. Negotiations were set for August 27, 1919. The night before, however, the Chinese postponed the negotiations "until a stable government had been formed."⁵⁸

Empire was a problem throughout Asia in the 1920s. China's own problems with British and Japanese imperial aspirations were direct catalysts for Tibet's problems with China as empire.⁵⁹ In the summer of 1919, a rash of anti-British propaganda surfaced in several Chinese cities. Pamphlets circulated stating that the British planned to include "Kansu, the Kokonor, half of Szechuan, and the smaller half of Yunnan in Tibet, and to cut it off from the rest of China."⁶⁰ Such a large land grab, the pamphlets stated, made the Japanese affair at Qingdao pale in comparison, rhetorically asking "Is this not equal to hundreds of Tsingtaos?"⁶¹ In Beijing and Tianjin, the pamphlets were quickly traced to Japanese sources and confiscated by the Chinese police. At the time, Japanese influence in China was strong and even stronger was their position in Qingdao. Under pressure from Japan, the Chinese canceled the negotiations, fearing that if they did not, the Qingdao question would be adversely affected.⁶² In response, the British decided to wait for the Chinese to settle their affairs, but after two years, there was no sign from the Chinese Government that they intended to reopen discussions about Tibet. The British decided that this had been long enough to wait.

On August 26, 1921, the British Government submitted a formal written statement to the Chinese Government. It read in full as follows:

In view of the commitments of His Majesty's Government to the Tibetan Government arising out of the tripartite negotiations of 1914, and in view of the fact that the Chinese Government accepted, with the exception of the boundary clause, the draft convention of 1914, providing for Tibetan autonomy under Chinese suzerainty, and formally re-affirmed their attitude in this respect in their offer of 1919, His Majesty's Government do not feel justified, failing a resumption of the negotiations in the immediate future, in withholding any longer their recognition of the status of Tibet as an autonomous State under the suzerainty of China, and intend dealing on this basis with Tibet in the future.⁶³

Beyond this, the British Legation in Peking orally informed the Chinese that if the negotiations were not resumed within a month then they would upgrade their understanding of Tibet's autonomy and downgrade that of China's suzerainty:

[We would] regard ourselves as having a free hand to deal with Tibet as an autonomous State, if necessary without further reference to China, to enter into close relations with the Tibetans, send an officer to Lhasa from time to time to consult with the Tibetan Government whenever the latter or the British Government consider it desirable to do so, open up intercourse to an increased extent between India and the Tibetan Trade Marts, and give the Tibetans any reasonable assistance they may require in the development and protection of their country.⁶⁴

A month passed; negotiations were not resumed. On October 11, 1921, the Tibetan Government was informed of this change in policy, albeit in an edited version of the change that excluded British comments about Chinese suzerainty:

In pursuance of their policy His Majesty's Government will now grant to the Tibetan Government reasonable assistance in the protection and development of Tibet. They will therefore permit the Tibetan Government to import on payment munitions in installments at adequate intervals, provided that the Tibetan Government gives assurance in writing that such munitions will be used solely for self-defense and for internal police work.⁶⁵ His Majesty's Government rely on the Tibetan Government to maintain its *status quo*, and pending the fulfillment by the Chinese of their assurance that they will resume negotiations when the Conference at Washington is ended—to refrain most carefully from all provocative or aggressive action on the frontier.⁶⁶

Through these formal communiqués, the British Government clearly stated their intent to honor the status quo in Tibet; the problem was, of course, that each party interpreted the status quo differently—autonomous to the British, suzerain to the Chinese, and independent to the Tibetans. For the next nine years, an eastern border adhering to the 1918 Chamdo Agreement was more or less followed until 1930 when the frontier erupted again.

In the 1930s, war broke out between Tibetan and Chinese troops following fighting between Dargye (dar rgyas) and Beri (be ri) monasteries in Kham,⁶⁷ there was

continuing tension between the Panchen Lama and the Tibetan Government [which] was felt in the borderlands,⁶⁸ and, in Bathang, a Tibetan official of the Mongolian-Tibetan Affairs Office in Nanjing staged a coup that turned into a two month long siege with fighting between local troops, Kuomintang troops, and the Tibetan Army. There was no longer a British presence on the frontier as in 1922 the intelligence post at Dartsendo had been merged with that of the Vice-Consul at Chengdu.⁶⁹ The British were therefore not involved in these military and diplomatic battles in Kham. Nonetheless, Chinese official and popular protest over Great Britain's involvement in Tibetan affairs continued. In fact, the world's first Save Tibet organization was Chinese.

Posters warning of Great Britain's ill intentions towards Tibet were plastered about the city of Chongqing in 1927. Four of the posters, which were signed by the "Save Tibet Society," painted foreboding pictures for both Tibet and China, respectively depicting the following scenes:

1. An Englishman, with sword in hand, inviting Tibetans to join him, while a border Tibetan says, "Do not join the British, they are bad men."
2. A rice hulling mill grinding the skulls of Lamas, the ox being the Dalai Lama, and the driver British.
3. Lamas "kowtowing" to a figure on a cross.
4. Tibetans driving Chinese across the border, the Tibetans being represented as puppets on a string, which are held by an Englishman on a chair in the background.⁷⁰

This anti-British and anti-Christian sentiment was matched by an invigorated brand of Chinese nationalism under the tutelage of Sun Yat-sen and Chiang Kai-shek (Duara 1993). One way that Kuomintang leaders fueled this Chinese nationalism was with the revival of the view of China as five nations—China, Mongolia, Turkestan, Manchuria, and Tibet. One direct product of this national campaign was a newly invigorated Mongolian and Tibetan Affairs Committee.

In 1929, the Mongolian and Tibetan Affairs Committee started a newsletter called the "Tibet-Mongolian Weekly News." One of the newsletter editors was Kelsang Tsering, a Tibetan from Bathang who was later to stage the 1932 coup there. The first edition of the newsletter contained a cartoon showing four healthy men dining together while an emaciated person peeked in through a half-open door; the emaciated figure was Tibet, the others the four remaining nations of China. Below the cartoon it read, "The five nations must live, and four have already partaken of the food offered by the Chinese Republic and are waxing stronger thereby. O people of Tibet, who follow after others! Cease regarding from afar the drama being played on the stage of the Chinese Republic. If you will eat the food of the Three Rulers (i.e., the Chinese Republic) nothing will prevent you from becoming strong."⁷¹ To the alarm of the British, the newsletter's audience was international, including subscribers in Kalimpong, India. Both Kalimpong subscribers, Reverend Tharchin, publisher of the *Tibetan Mirror* newspaper (*yul phyogs so so'i gsar 'gyur me long*), and Mr. Tsa Serkang, an official of the Panchen Lama's office, received their copies only after Lieutenant-Colonel J. L. R. Weir, then Political Officer in Sikkim, thoroughly perused the newsletter for "objectionable articles."⁷²

Lieutenant-Colonel Weir's responsibilities extended beyond clipping offensive cartoons. In 1932, he was deputed to Lhasa at the invitation of the Tibetan Government.

The internal dispute between Dargye and Beri monasteries had turned into intermittent warfare between the Tibetan Government, who backed Dargye monastery, and the Sichuan Provincial forces, who aided Beri monastery. Truces were made twice during the fighting, first in November 1931 when the Tibetans were advancing, and second in October 1932 when the Chinese were.⁷³ Both truces were drafted in military terms; the first truce granted the Tibetan troops military jurisdiction in Kanze, Nyarong, and several other neighboring territories; terms of the second truce focused on the Dri Chu, placing Tibetan military domain west of the river, and Chinese military domain to the east.⁷⁴ The agreements were signed locally by General Khyungram, representative of the Dalai Lama and the three monasteries Sera, Drepung, and Ganden, and by Tang Ko-san, representative of Nanjing Government's Commission for Mongolian and Tibetan Affairs and the Szechuan Provincial Authorities. Neither the Lhasa nor Nanjing government accepted either of the treaties. With the Chinese westward advance in the spring and summer of 1932, the Tibetan Government decided that British mediation was needed. On August 8, the Kashag sent a letter to Weir requesting British aid in making representations to the Chinese Government.⁷⁵ Weir spent the fall of 1932 in Lhasa sorting out frontier affairs and trying to smooth over Tibetan frustration with the British Government's lack of success in negotiating with the Chinese. Determining that the eastern boundary remained "the outstanding obstacle to a permanent settlement between the two countries," Weir set about drafting a boundary proposal.⁷⁶

Continuing in the tradition of Henry McMahon and Eric Teichman, Weir informally solicited information about the border territories from "officials and non-officials who are acquainted with Eastern Tibet."⁷⁷ The proposal he drafted followed the Simla Agreement's Article Nine, but with one major deviation. Recognizing the loophole that the vague phrase "existing rights" offered to the Tibetan Government, Weir decided to eliminate this loophole by moving the territories in question.⁷⁸ Accepting the Tibetan Government claim that Derge and Nyarong were restored to Tibet in 1865 by the Manchu Emperor, and that Zhao Erfeng's 1910 occupation of these territories involved unjust use of force, Weir placed Derge, Nyarong, and Sangen in Outer Tibet.⁷⁹ Weir's effort in Lhasa, the third British attempt at boundary architecture, was also the final British attempt. Concurrent to Weir's work in Lhasa, the British and Tibetan Government were both inquiring in Nanjing as to the possibility of holding the much delayed second tripartite conference. The negotiations were not to be. Chiang Kai-shek refused to allow the British to participate in any negotiations regarding Tibet, and His Holiness the Dalai Lama refused to negotiate without British participation. For their part, the British decided that "the time was not opportune for pressing the Chinese Government," and suggested to the Tibetans that they negotiate directly with the Chinese, stating that of course the British would follow the discussions "with great interest."⁸⁰ Weir's boundary proposal was consigned to the archives, and in eastern Tibet, the situation remained unsettled.

In the fall of 1933, the Dalai Lama is reported to have issued an ultimatum to the Sichuan Provincial troops: vacate Tibetan Government territories east of the Dri Chu or suffer the pain of a Tibetan Army invasion.⁸¹ Just a few months after this threat, on December 17, 1933, His Holiness the 13th Dalai Lama passed away. The fighting at Dargye monastery continued. In February 1934, Tibetan military leaders presented a three-part list of demands to their Chinese counterparts in "Ai-ta."⁸² The Tibetans (1) renounced the 1932 truce, (2) requested the return to Tibet of Derge, Kanze, Nyarong,

Chuwo, Tsakalo, and all villages west of the river in Bathang, and (3) requested that the Dargye monks remain unpunished for their actions.⁸³ The Chinese refused to meet these demands, and hostilities resumed for three months until a third ceasefire was reached on May 17, 1934.⁸⁴ While the turbulence in the borderlands continued, in Nanjing the Chinese Government was plotting a diplomatic means of settling of the troubles between the two countries.

In April 1934, General Huang Mu-sung was named "Special Commissioner to Tibet" by the Chinese Government and was sent to Lhasa. Although advertised as a mission to pay posthumous tribute to the Dalai Lama, Huang was also specially deputed to attempt to secure Tibetan allegiance to the Chinese Government. Thus, after the tributary portion of the mission was completed, Huang presented a proposal to the Tibetan Government outlining the Kuomintang Government's idea of Tibet's place within the Chinese nation-state. This proposal required Tibet to become a constituent member of the Chinese republic, to acknowledge the authority of the Chinese Government, and to allow Chinese administration of Tibetan foreign affairs, defense, communications, as well as the appointing of religious and secular officials.⁸⁵ Chamdo would be the boundary between Tibet and China.⁸⁶ The Tibetan Government responded that they would not accept Chinese authority over any aspect of Tibetan affairs, nor did they wish to become a member of the Chinese republic.⁸⁷ They were, however, prepared to make some concessions. In their counter-proposal, the Tibetans stated that they would recognize and revive earlier political and religious ties between Tibet and China, and arrange for the return of the Panchen Lama to Tibet, *if* the two governments were able to settle the boundary between Tibet and China, specifically the turning over of Golok, Derge, Nyarong, and Dargye monastery to the Tibetan Government.⁸⁸ Once again the boundary issue proved the least negotiable item. A stalemate was reached again, Huang returned to China in late fall 1934, and discussions were never resumed.

Huang Mu-sung's 1934 mission to Lhasa marked the final attempt between the Chinese and Tibetan Governments to settle the boundary. All ensuing attempts were either between local authorities or were unilateral efforts. In February 1935, the Chinese Government formed a Committee for the Establishment of a Xikang Provincial Administration.⁸⁹ First proposed by Zhao Erfeng, the province of Xikang was established in 1939 and abolished in 1956.⁹⁰ Its boundaries were ambitious, basically including territories claimed by Zhao as far west as Gyamda, and across the McMahon line into India as well.⁹¹ Although the Chinese continued to claim a Gyamda boundary with Tibet, the far western limit of Zhao Erfeng's advances, the Dri Chu became the *de facto* boundary following the 1932 agreement concluding the war between Dargye and Beri monasteries. The Tibetan Government, however, never accepted the loss of territory east of the Dri Chu as final or binding. In correspondence with British and Chinese officials, they consistently referred to the terms of the Simla, Chamdo, and Rongbatsa Treaties, and to the historical documentation—such as the Qing Emperor's restoration of Nyarong to Lhasa—that they believed was proof of their political connection to eastern Tibetan territories.

The borderlands east of the Dri Chu remained unsettled through the 1940s. Following the departure of Mao's long marchers from the Kanze area in 1936, the Tibetan Army crossed the Dri Chu and temporarily occupied Derge and other territories.⁹² This reclamation was short-lived, and the troops soon returned to Chamdo. At the

time, Tibet was struggling through the difficulties of successive regents and a junior Dalai Lama, and was not in a position to militarily or diplomatically secure the eastern border. Nor, however, was Chiang Kai-shek's Kuomintang Government, which was engaged in—and was losing—its own civil war. 1949 brought a new regime to China, one that did not hesitate to directly address the problem of Tibetan-Chinese relations. In the same year, the People's Liberation Army of the new People's Republic of China entered Dartsendo, the symbolic boundary between the two countries. In 1950, they crossed the Dri Chu and entered Chamdo. In 1951, the Chinese and Tibetans signed a Seventeen Point Agreement that brought Tibet under China. 1956 saw the demise of Xikang province, and the incorporation of Tibetan areas east of the Dri Chu, such as Derge, Nyarong, Bathang, and Dartsendo, into Sichuan province, some directly and some within the newly-formed Garze Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture and Aba Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture. In 1965, the boundaries of Tibet were established with the founding of the Tibetan Autonomous Region. The eastern frontier was Tibet's Dri Chu, the Yangtze River. The border was finally—and unilaterally—settled.

**Legacies of the border disputes: colonial, united,
and contested models of Tibet**

“If one looks for the reason for this fighting, the reason is that earlier, in 1914, during the border agreement between Britain, China, and Tibet, they did not finalize the [border] decision.”

Reverend Tharchin, *Melong*, September 1, 1932

Commenting from Kalimpong on the war between Dargye and Beri monasteries, the Reverend Tharchin's words sum up the story of eastern Tibet in the twentieth century. The inability of the Tibetans, Chinese, and British to settle the boundary issue in Simla proved to be a catalyst for a long series of subsequent disputes in and about the border. To the British, the boundary settlement was a matter of drawing a line on a map and from that inferring sovereignty. For the Chinese and Tibetans, the territory-sovereignty equation was both powerful and dangerous. While both were willing to compromise on issues of suzerainty and sovereignty, they were not as flexible when it came to territory. In this respect, the boundary was much more than a line on a map for the Tibetans and Chinese. It was an area saturated with cultural and historical significance. For China, the Tibetan frontier was a symbol of China's longstanding project of empire building; for Tibet, the eastern frontier was a key component of the multi-regional nation and a crucial extension of the politico-religious state. The association of land and national sentiment (be it imperial or foundational) was immensely powerful for both China and Tibet. Eventually, the lack of a border settlement would leave the People's Republic of China with an all-but-blank map upon which to fix the boundary of Tibet. This same lack of a defined border leaves the Tibetan Government-in-Exile with a series of political and historical claims to territories in eastern Tibet, but without any one document that clearly establishes the pre-1950s borders of Tibet.

These early 20th century attempts to delineate the eastern border between Tibet and China show that the question of what constitutes Tibet is not easily answered.

At present, there are two dominant models of Tibet that I call the “colonial” and “united” models, and one latent model that I refer to as the “contested” model. Set in place by the British and implemented by the Chinese, the *colonial model* of Tibet privileges modern principles of statehood in its view of the Tibetan polity. In contrast, the *united model* retains premodern Tibetan views of community, overlaying them on modern forms of the state. Conceptual differences between these models are not just disagreements about content or over where lines should be drawn on a map, but are more deeply rooted differences in ways of imagining, living, and staking claim to community, in this case to the modern nation-state. Considering both the disparity and the stalemate between the colonial and united models, I offer a third model that attempts to bring together Tibetan and Western statemaking principles—the *contested model*. The contested model calls attention to the cultural and political bases of both the colonial and united models, as well as to the contested and unsettled nature of the boundaries of the Tibetan state during the first half of the twentieth century, and thus at the time of the Chinese invasion.

1. *The colonial model*

Throughout its empire and beyond, the British often sought to fit or at times merge local concepts of sociopolitical organization with modern models of nation-state.⁹³ In the case of Tibet, the fit was not a good one. Following from McMahon and Teichman’s efforts to delineate the borders of Tibet, the next British official to take on the task was Sir Charles Bell, Political Officer in Sikkim from 1904–1921. Bell’s attempt to affix territorial boundaries to the Tibetan nation and state remains one of the predominant explanatory models for Tibetan political organization. Building on McMahon’s concepts of “Inner” and “Outer” Tibet, Bell proposed two new terms, “political” and “ethnographic” Tibet, and also allowed for a third in-between zone. “Political” Tibet referred to those areas administered directly by Lhasa. In eastern Tibet, Bell included the territories of Derge, Chamdo, Dragyab, and Markham in “political” Tibet; Golok, Nyarong, Bathang, and Lithang were placed in the in-between zone as being under dispute between Tibet and China; and, all other territories were considered “ethnographic” Tibet.⁹⁴ In Bell’s model, only areas of eastern Tibet were listed as being under contention.⁹⁵ Tibetan areas that had been incorporated into British India were not included, although the Tibetan government did contest British claims to several of these territories.

A fourth British official made a final adjustment to McMahon’s original model. In a 1962 scholarly publication, Hugh Richardson, the former Head of the British and later the Indian Mission in Lhasa, reinterpreted Bell’s “political” and “ethnographic” model. His reinterpretation eliminated the in-between zone of contention that was an important part of both the McMahon and Bell models. All Tibetan territories were now either part of “political” Tibet or part of “ethnographic” Tibet. Richardson’s revision of the earlier colonial models coincided with Chinese rule in the country, and reflected the political reality of the time—the Dri Chu was now the border of the Tibet Autonomous Region and was also Richardson’s boundary between “political” Tibet and “ethnographic” Tibet. Thus, only those territories within the TAR were counted as “political” Tibet. This final version of the model matches the Chinese boundaries of the Tibetan Autonomous Region, and is the model frequently used by scholars of Tibet.⁹⁶

Overall, the colonial model represents attempts to combine a European model of statehood with Lhasa models of local governance. Initial British attempts to account for the complexity of political relations in eastern Tibet eventually fell out of the model in its final version, such that territories that had significant political relations with Lhasa are now glossed as being “ethnographically” Tibetan. The ensuing dilemma is two-fold: first, the general inadequacy of the political/ethnographic divide in the Tibetan case, and second, the particular difficulty of accounting for and accepting Tibetan forms of sociopolitical organization that look different than those of the dominant nation-state model. While the advent of Chinese rule in Tibet has resulted in a definitive demarcation and labeling of Tibetan territories (as Tibetan Autonomous Region, Prefectures, and Counties), these boundaries are as arbitrary as they are political or historic.

2. *The united model*

The statement “Bod chol kha gsum red” or “Tibet is three regions” is often used to describe Tibet. Deceptively simple, this view of Tibet as the three regions of U-Tsang, Amdo, and Kham is one in use among Tibetans both in exile and within current-day Tibet.⁹⁷ While numerous scholars argue for the long-standing existence of Tibet as a nation and as a state, the two have not always been coterminous.⁹⁸ Although the Tibetan state was decentralized in many areas and periods, the current invocation of the united model fuses together nation and state. The regions included in the model cover all of the Tibetan-designated territories in the People’s Republic of China, but Tibetan territories outside of China such as Ladakh or former portions of southeast Tibet ceded to India during the Simla Convention occupy an uneasy place within the model consonant with the current political situation. In sum, the united view of Tibet is a cultural, historical, and political one, aligned with modern understandings of a country as accomplished by mapping politics onto geography.

The united model of Tibet is used by the Tibetan Government-in-Exile in their administration of the refugee community. Tibetans from all regions of Tibet fall under their domain, yet in terms of the political boundaries of Tibet, the Government-in-Exile is not always as clear. The lack of a definitive governmental statement is not merely a strategy of reticence, but is a product of the confused status of Tibet at both local and global levels. This confusion, certainly encouraged by Tibetan conservatism and internal problems in the 1920s–1940s, was and is also a product of pre-1947 British muddling of and waffling on the status of the Tibetan state, by U.S. decisions in the 1950s and 1960s that the issue of Tibet was to be about human rights and not statehood, and of the sometimes clumsy and always delicate Tibetan negotiations with the People’s Republic of China since 1951. With this in mind, in a 1996 interview the Dalai Lama explained his position as dual—that culturally all Tibetan areas constitute Tibet, but that in terms of an “occupied” state, the situation is different and must be analyzed in terms of not just international expectations but the complexity of Tibetan sociopolitical forms.⁹⁹ He refuses a strictly political definition of the Tibetan state, and also rejects the notion that because an area was not “directly” under Lhasa it meant that they were under China.

In a variation on the united model, anthropologist Geoffrey Samuel argues that Lhasa (pace the colonial model) is not representative of all of Tibet. In his monumental

1993 study *Civilized Shamans: Buddhism in Tibetan Societies*, Samuel contends that premodern Tibet is best thought of as not a centralized or even a decentralized state, but a series of *societies* existing in a continuous social field.¹⁰⁰ Despite the popular view of Tibet as a theocratic state with Lhasa at the center, there were in fact a wide variety of political and social formations across Tibetan societies—large agricultural states, smaller agricultural states, agricultural populations on the edges of states, and nomadic pastoralists.¹⁰¹ Some of these groups were subordinate to others, and some were self-governing; many, but not all of these groups, were subordinate to the Dalai Lama's administration in Lhasa. The administrative aspects of rule did not outrank the ritual or performative aspects, and the control of people was considered more important than the control of land. Overall, the united model rests on the same sort of logic as the colonial model—the application of modern statemaking principles to Tibet. The difference is in the interpretation of pre-1950s Tibet, and the weight of history and self-determination versus current political realities.

3. *The contested model*

Attention to the differences between European models and Tibetan sociopolitical arrangements in and beyond Lhasa reveals the limitations of both the colonial and the united models, specifically the inflexibility of both models in allowing for border districts to be ruled in or out of Tibet. For example, while the colonial model currently exempts contested zones, the united model recognizes only those parts of Tibet ruled outside the Tibet Autonomous Region, and turning a mostly blind eye to territories incorporated into India or Nepal. Contradictions between the historical aspect and the self-determination aspect of the united model remain unaddressed in much the same way that the imperial aspects of the colonial model are presented as objective truths. Thus, in order to navigate a middle ground between these two models, I suggest a third model—the “contested” model.

The contested model of Tibet adds historical contingency to the political and graphical elements of the colonial and united models. It has three parts: (1) the current boundaries of Tibet (the Tibet Autonomous Region, as well as Tibetan Autonomous Counties and Prefectures) as defined by the People's Republic of China, (2) areas under contention between Tibet and China, and between Tibet and India, and (3) the historic boundaries of the Tibetan polities as understood in the same way as Samuel's Tibetan societies, i.e., a series of polities existing in a continuous and linked field. Were this model to be represented as a map, it would have to be a series of maps demonstrating change over time, and including the “hard” lines of modern nation-states, graphical indication of contested territories, and gradual shading to designate areas of stronger and weaker connections to Lhasa, as well as the historically expansive borders of Tibet.¹⁰² This model pairs the reality of Tibet's current colonization with a pre-1950 version of Tibetan geopolitics and post-1950 Tibetan sentiment about what constitutes Tibet. It recognizes that the blank spots and overlapping zones that modern international politics will not tolerate on a map represent other, similarly viable sociopolitical systems.

In the first half of the twentieth century, Tibetan Government efforts to settle their eastern border involved attempts to adapt to modern statemaking principles without giving up premodern religico-political arrangements. They fought vociferously for

certain territories, and accepted compromises for others. Above all, the contested model acknowledges that at the time of the Chinese invasion of Tibet, the boundaries of Tibet were not settled. Instead, the borders remained unsettled, caught between modern and premodern concepts in a series of stalled negotiations between Tibet, republican China, and British India. By simultaneously depicting current Chinese political borders, historic Tibetan geopolitical zones, and areas under contention, the contested model accomplishes two goals: first, it avoids the implication that only certain areas are really Tibet (i.e., such as “political” Tibet, but not “ethnographic” Tibet), and second, it demonstrates the contingent and complicated nature of defining the nation-state by calling attention to sociopolitical features *as well as* to the multiple, interested parties involved in efforts to determine the boundaries of Tibet.

Conclusion

The British quit India in 1947. They were not involved in negotiations between the Tibetans and the Communist Chinese government in the 1950s. Their earlier participation, however, from Lord Curzon on down, was instrumental in fixing the eventual boundaries and political status of Tibet. While the British managed to secure Tibetan dependence on British political support, this gain was at a cost. From the 1904 Younghusband political and military expedition to Tibet¹⁰³ on through the 1950s, the Chinese national imagination was fixated on the threat of British imperialist designs on Tibet. Rumors abounded about the number of British in Tibet, about Indian and Gurkha troops accompanying British officers, and about imminent plans for a joint British-Tibetan invasion of China.¹⁰⁴ The power of rumor as social fact and historical source is evident in the Chinese Government’s legitimation in part of their liberation of Tibet by referring to imperialist forces there. The British, for their part, mostly ignored these rumors and as a result missed the extent and depth of Chinese political emotion towards Tibet.¹⁰⁵ They also, however, missed the profound connections between the peoples and polities of Tibet that, if anything, have been strengthened over the course of the 20th century.

In the 14th Dalai Lama’s complex answer to the question of what constitutes Tibet, echoes of earlier Tibetan boundary claims resound loudly. In Simla, eastern Tibetan territories were considered integral parts of Tibet, “just as a body would claim a limb as its portion.”¹⁰⁶ Premodern political formations, however, do not always translate into modern political forms. Thus, while Tibet is—and was—both nation and state, it is not now and was not then a fully consolidated nation-state in a modern sense. Tibetan geopolitics continues with its own mode of organization, one determined more by local models of jurisdiction and allegiance than by modern concepts of treaties and boundaries. The political status of eastern Tibet remained under dispute until the 1950s. Settlements were never reached for any of the most highly disputed territories, including Derge and Nyarong. Efforts by the British to resolve the boundaries of Tibet were never realized. Called upon to mediate—to be the boundary stone between Tibet and China—their attempts to settle the boundary were compromised by their desire to assist Tibet and advance British interests in general without jeopardizing the British position in China. In the end, as Alastair Lamb wrote in 1960, “the long-term beneficiary” of Lord Curzon’s Tibetan policy was neither India nor Tibet but China.

Notes

- 1 *Acknowledgements.* An earlier version of the Simla section of this paper entitled “Border Politics in the Making of Modern Tibet” was presented at Jawaharlal Nehru University, March 19, 1999. Thank you to Professor Dawa Norbu for this invitation. Research was funded by the American Institute of Indian Studies and the Program in Anthropology and History at the University of Michigan. I thank Nicholas Dirks, Lawrence Epstein, Donald Lopez, and Matthew Rudolph for their comments on this paper.
- 2 My translation. From Naga 1994: 147.
- 3 Curzon 1907, p. 7.
- 4 For studies of British policy towards and relations with Tibet, see Addy 1984, Goldstein 1989, Hansen 1996, Lamb 1960, and McKay 1997 among others.
- 5 I use the term “British” to refer to both Great Britain and British India in accordance with their joint administration of Tibetan policy.
- 6 On this aspect of state sovereignty, see the collected essays in Biersteker and Weber 1996, and in Wilson and Donnan 1998.
- 7 On the global spread of the European nation-state, see Anderson 1983, Chatterjee 1986, 1993, and Hobsbawm 1993.
- 8 For studies of Tibetan sociopolitical organization, see Goldstein 1971, 1989 and Samuel 1993.
- 9 On Kham, see the collected essays in Epstein 2002. For a discussion of Kham within the greater sociopolitical Tibetan world, see McGranahan 2002.
- 10 This discussion is indebted to Thongchai Winichakul’s 1994 study of how British and French modern geopolitics displaced premodern Thai systems of structuring the nation-state. The Thai situation discussed by Thongchai bears striking similarities to the situation in Tibet.
- 11 Thongchai 1994.
- 12 See Lamb 1964, 1966, Mehra 1974, Woodman 1969.
- 13 On Tibet-Qing relations see Petech 1972, Kolmas 1967, Ahmad 1970. For a comparative look at Tibetans at the Qing court, see Sperling 1998 and Hevia 1993.
- 14 Appendix 1: Extract from Memorandum communicated to Chinese Government by Sir J. Jordan, 17th August 1912, IOR L/P+S/18/B.201.
- 15 IOR L/P+S/10/432.
- 16 Appendix 2: Extract from Viscount Morley’s speech in the House of Lords, 28 July 1913, IOR L/P+S/18/B.201.
- 17 Cabinet paper prepared by John Evelyn Shuckburgh, India Office, 17 October 1913, L/P+S/18/B.201.
- 18 I have examined three separate sets of the claims and found them to be consistent with each other (with several minor variations). The texts are, as follows: (1) original documents in the India Office Library, London, especially in MSS Eur F 80/177, (2) the Tibetan text *shing stag rgya gar ’phags pa’i yul du dbyin bod rgya gsum chings mol mdzad lugs kun gsal me long* (The Mirror of Clear Reflection about the Simla Treaty between Britain, China, and Tibet in the Wood Tiger Year), and (3) an English text published in China: *The Boundary Question between China and Tibet: A Valuable Record of the Tripartite Conference between China, Britain, and Tibet held in India, 1913–1914*. Peking, 1940. Thank you to Tashi Tsering for sharing a copy of the Tibetan text with me.
- 19 Dawa Norbu (1990) refers to the sum of British, Russian, and Chinese designs on Tibet as the “external sterilization” of Tibet in favor of imperial strategy in Asia.
- 20 Three stone pillars were also erected—one in each of the capitals, and one at Merugang, north of Xining, for the northern boundary.
- 21 IOR Eur MSS F80/177.
- 22 See T. Tsering 1985.
- 23 IOR Eur MSS F80/177.
- 24 On Zhao’s mission, see Sperling 1976, Lee 1979, Shakabpa 1967, nd., and Coleman 2002.
- 25 IOR Eur MSS F80/177.
- 26 *ibid.*

- 27 *ibid.*
- 28 Cohn 1996, Dirks 1992.
- 29 Edney 1990.
- 30 Hopkirk 1982.
- 31 Ordered by B. Alston, British Legation, Peking, 4 September 1913, IOR L/P+S/10/432.
- 32 King's frontier reports are in IOR L/P+S/10/432.
- 33 IOR Eur MSS F80/177.
- 34 *ibid.*
- 35 *ibid.*
- 36 Wai Chiao Pu to the British Minister, 29 June 1914, enclosure in Sir John Jordan's dispatch No. 250, 30 June 1914, IOR L/P+S/10/718.
- 37 Li 1956, p. 143.
- 38 See O. R. Coales, Vice-Consul at Tachienlu, letter to Beilby Alston Esq., His Majesty's Charge d'Affaires, Peking, March 31, 1917. IOR L/P+S/10/714, Part III.
- 39 Kapp 1973, Stapleton 1999.
- 40 Teichman letter to Sir John Jordan, May 28, 1918, Chamdo, IOR L/P+S/10/714, Part I.
- 41 In 1922, Teichman published a book about his experiences on the frontier—*Travels of a Consular Officer in Eastern Tibet*.
- 42 In draft of newspaper article "The Recent Crisis in Sino-Tibetan Affairs," IOR L/P+S/10/714, Part I.
- 43 Teichman to Jordan, 16 July 1918, Chamdo, IOR L/P+S/10/714, Part II.
- 44 *ibid.*
- 45 Teichman letter to Jordan, 25 July 1918, Chamdo, IOR L/P+S/10/714, Part I.
- 46 Teichman letter to Jordan, 21 August 1918, Chamdo, *ibid.*
- 47 *ibid.*
- 48 Teichman to Jordan, 1 September 1918, and, 1 August 1918, Chamdo, *ibid.*
- 49 Campbell letter to Grant, Camp Pharijong, 17 September 1918, IOR L/P+S/10/714, Part I.
- 50 *ibid.*, my emphasis.
- 51 IOR L/P+S/10/714, Part I.
- 52 Teichman writes to Jordan: "I endeavored to keep myself as much as possible in the background, encouraging my Chinese and Tibetan colleagues to do all the necessary talking, and intervening only when it was necessary to decide a point; thus removing, I hope, any impression that I was dictating the agreement to them." 21 August 1918, *ibid.*
- 53 Teichman to Jordan, Camp Rongbatsa, near Kantze, 23 October 1918, *ibid.*
- 54 March 8, 1922 Minute Paper, about the question of the boundaries, IOR L/P+S/10/718.
- 55 *ibid.*
- 56 The Kokonor territory was part of the region Tibetans considered Amdo (A mdo) and the Chinese Qinghai. During the period discussed in this essay, this territory was mostly under the rule of Muslim warlord Ma Pufang.
- 57 March 8, 1922 Minute Paper, about the question of the boundaries, IOR L/P+S/10/718.
- 58 IOR L/P+S/10/715.
- 59 On the European and Japanese colonial (and semi-colonial) presence in China, see Barlow 1993, Hevia 1992, and Young 1998.
- 60 Summarized translation of the pamphlet, distributed in Peking, June 11, 1919, enclosed in Jordan to Curzon, No. 262, June 16, 1919, *ibid.*
- 61 *ibid.* Qingdao (and several other territories in Shandong province) had been leased by the Germans since 1898. In 1914, the Japanese (who were allied with Britain) demanded that the Germans surrender the territory. When the Germans declined to respond to this ultimatum, on August 23, 1914, the Japanese declared war, evicted the Germans, and occupied a span of Chinese territory greater than that originally leased by the Germans. On January 1915, the Japanese made twenty-one bold demands to Chinese President Yuan Shih-k'ai that in effect sought to establish Japanese dominance over China. Eventually, in May 1916, China agreed to all but the most invasive of demands. Anti-Japanese sentiment was widespread, and Qingdao became the symbol of Japanese imperial aggression in China. See McAleavy 1967: 216–227. Chinese troubles with Japan continued into the 1930s; see Coble 1991.

- 62 IOR L/P+S/10/715.
- 63 Minute Paper, Situation in Eastern Tibet, ca. September 1932, IOR L/P+S/12/4170.
- 64 *ibid.*
- 65 The total amount of munitions, which were to be sent in installments, was ten mountain guns with ammunition, twenty machine guns, ten thousand rifles, and one million rounds of small arms ammunition. The arms and ammunition were supplied from 1921 to 1932 (*ibid.*). The Chinese Government made numerous protests to the British about this arrangement. Drawing on Japanese archival sources, Tieh-Tseng Li (1956: 158) claims that the Japanese were also supplying weapons to the Tibetans in 1921.
- 66 *ibid.*
- 67 See Shakabpa (1967) English version, pp. 268–9, Tibetan version, pp. 300–1; L. Epstein 2000; Richardson 1998[1945]: 42–3.
- 68 See Jagou 1992 and Goldstein 1989.
- 69 In 1932, the Chengdu Consular Post was also abolished. In 1943, the post was reestablished including responsibility for the Tachienlu area. IOR L/P+S/12/394.
- 70 A. F. Blunt to Lampson, Peking, October 10, 1927, No. 19, IOR L/P+S/10/1228.
- 71 Weir to Foreign Secretary, Government of India, 16 November 1929, IOR L/P+S/10/1228.
- 72 Weir to Superintendent of Post Offices, Darjeeling and Sikkim-Tibet Division, 28 November 1929, *ibid.*
- 73 Sources on the conflict are varied as to the actual dates of the truces, but more consistent on the terms of them. See issues of *Yul phyogs so so'i gсар 'gyur me long* from December 1930 through September 1932; Shakabpa *ibid.*; Li 1956.; Liu and Wi; India Office Records L/P+S/12/4169, L/P+S/12/4170, L/P+S/12/2279.
- 74 A treaty was also signed in 1933 between the Tibetan Government and Ma Pufang, the independent Muslim governor of Qinghai.
- 75 Tibetan Government letter to Weir, 8 August 1932, IOR L/P+S/12/4170. One month later, His Holiness the Dalai Lama sent a memorandum to the Government of India via Weir detailing the history of the fighting between Dargye and Beri monasteries. *ibid.*
- 76 Weir to Foreign Secretary, GOI, 11 November 1932, Camp Lhasa, *ibid.*
- 77 *ibid.*
- 78 There is also the possibility that Weir was influenced by the writings of Sir Charles Bell. Bell (1924: 251) examined British understandings of eastern Tibet, conceding that “The Tibetan Government have real rights in Inner Tibet and real power there. . . . The settlement of ecclesiastical questions in Inner Tibet rests with the Dalai Lama and his advisers, as does also the appointment of many of the secular Governors and their assistants. The power and responsibility of the Tibetan Government throughout this territory is greater than generally supposed,” p. 251.
- 79 The Tibetan Government also argued that in addition to Derge and Nyarong, the five Hor states should come under the direct rule of Lhasa. However, Weir decided to award them to Inner Tibet “(i.e., China)” arguing that “they are within easy reach of Tachienlu and thus come into the Chinese sphere of influence.” See Chief Ministers of Tibet to Weir, 11 November 1932, and Weir to Foreign Secretary, 11 November 1932. *ibid.*
- 80 1933 Annual Report, China, IOR L/P+S/12/2279.
- 81 Chungking Quarterly Political Summary, December 23, 1933, IOR L/P+S/12/4169
- 82 “Ai-ta” appears to be the Chinese name for either *wa ra* or *'du mdo*, two villages twenty miles west of Derge on the west side of the Dri Chu.
- 83 Li, *ibid.*, pp. 166–7.
- 84 *Ibid.*; and 1934 Annual Report, IOR L/P+S/12/2279.
- 85 Appendix A, The Treaty Position, in Report on Lhasa Mission, 1936–7, Gould to India, 30 April 1937, IOR L/P+S/12/36/27.
- 86 Khung 1985 cited in Goldstein 1989: 225.
- 87 Appendix A, IOR L/P+S/12/36/27.
- 88 *ibid.* Goldstein 1989 includes Kanze, Bathang, and Lithang on this list.
- 89 British Legation, Peking letter No. 253 to Sub-Legation, Chungking, 12 February 1935, IOR L/PS/12/4182.
- 90 See Peng 2000.

- 91 Xikang included several Han Chinese and Yi territories (Peng, *ibid.*). Fifteen of its thirty-three districts were west of the Dri Chu (China Annual Report, 1937, IOR L/P+S/12/2279).
- 92 Richardson 1998[1945]: 64.
- 93 For studies of colonial statemaking, see Leach 1960, Prescott 1987, Rudolph and Rudolph 1984, Strang 1996 and Thongchai 1994. With regard to British empire and statemaking in non-colonized Nepal, see Burghart 1984; Des Chene 1991; Michael 1999; Onta 1996.
- 94 Bell 1992[1924,] p. 6.
- 95 Sir Charles Bell had another unique idea for settling the boundary issue. Intrigued by a suggestion from one of his Tibetan staff members, in 1924 Charles Bell proposed a plebiscite for the eastern Tibetan districts under dispute. Noting a democratic tradition in Tibet, he suggested putting the boundary dispute to a vote by the local people, with the ballots to be counted by a trio of British, Tibetan, and Chinese officials. Each territory would vote for an affiliation with either Tibet or China. Bell's proposal was the only suggestion for a boundary settlement that involved the participation of the peoples of the frontier. As far as I can tell, British officials never considered the plan. See Bell 1992[1924]: 249–250.
- 96 The most spirited and cogent advocate of this model is anthropologist Melvyn C. Goldstein (1991, 1994, 1997).
- 97 On the use of the “chol kha gsum” formation in contemporary political protest in Tibet, see Schwartz 1994 and Sperling 1994.
- 98 Recent studies of the Tibetan nation and nationalism include Dreyfus 1994, Karmay 1994, Klieger 1996, D. Norbu 1995, Stoddard 1994, and Smith 1996.
- 99 International Commission of Jurists 1997, pp. 349–354.
- 100 Samuel 1993, pp. 3, 586n1. See also Samuel 1982.
- 101 *ibid.*, pp. 39, 140–1.
- 102 I draw here on the historical maps of eastern Tibet produced by *Academica Tibetica* that use gradual shading to demonstrate the substance and strength of local relations with Lhasa.
- 103 Lord Curzon describes this “expedition,” which included the Anglo-Tibetan War in Gyantse, to be a retaliatory mission—“Had the Tibetans respected our Frontiers, we should never have marched three years ago to Lhasa” (1907: 6).
- 104 An example from a Chinese newspaper reads as follows:
- “While the dwarf slaves are aggressive in the Northeast,
the English barbarians plot to seize Tibet.
English flags set up all over Kanze and Chantui [Nyarong].
The Tibetan aborigines bring up reinforcements and prepare for an invasion.
A collision has already taken place at San-tung Ch'iao.
Let those who are mismanaging national affairs wake up.”
- Translation of article from the *Hsin Shu Pao*, Chungking, October 13, 1931, enclosed in Toller to Lampson, October 14, 1931, IOR L/P+S/10/1228.
- 105 Commenting on “the extraordinary tales that get into the local press regarding British activities in Tibet,” the Consular Officer in Chongqing writes to the British Legation in Beijing that “I did think at first of asking the authorities to put a stop to the publication of such unfounded reports, but came to the conclusion that to do so would be giving this screed an importance which it does not merit.” Toller to Lampson, April 1, 1931, *ibid.*
- 106 Tibetan claims presented at Simla, MSS Eur F 80/177.

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A REVIVER OF SA-SKYA-PA SCRIPTURAL STUDIES

David Jackson

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ONE of the most influential Sa-skya-pa teachers of scriptural studies in early-20th-century Tibet was Brag-g.yab Thub-bstan bzang-po (c.1891/2–c.1930). Though his name is little known among modern scholars – either Western or Tibetan – it was he more than anyone else who succeeded in reviving the tradition of scriptural exposition at the main Sa-skya-pa seminaries in dBus and gTsang provinces of Tibet.

The fact that Brag-g.yab Thub-bstan is not well known is hardly surprising, given that his main teacher, *mkhan-chen* gZhan-dga' (1871–1927), has also yet to receive the scholarly recognition that he deserves. The latter Khams-pa teacher, whose full name was gZhan-phan chos-kyi snang-ba, was doubtless one of the most influential Tibetan scholars of his time.¹ Usually known by his nick-name 'gZhan-dga', he made his reputation as an unrivalled 'seminary master' (*bshad grwa'i mkhan po*). Almost single-handedly gZhan-dga' reinvigorated and gave a new orientation to the non-dGe-lugs-pa traditions of Buddhist learning in Khams, and then throughout Tibet.

In contrast to dGe-lugs-pa scholasticism, which had enjoyed a largely unbroken development from the time of its origin (within 14th-century Sa-skya-pa and gSang-phu-ba traditions) down to the 1950s, the parallel traditions of the other religious schools saw a marked decline in the 18th and 19th centuries, especially in Central Tibet. After the establishment of a dGe-lugs-pa theocracy in the mid-17th century, the non-dGe-lugs-pa traditions of religious learning could not maintain their former vitality in the face of such strong and unrelenting political and economic domination.² The other traditions, it is true, had retained a few strongholds in the eastern Tibetan province of Khams. And gradually by the 19th-century Khams, and in particular the kingdom of Derge, became almost an alternative center of spiritual life for Tibet. In the late 1800s, led by the great masters mKhyen-brtse (1820–1892) and Kong-sprul (1813–1899), a movement was underway that shifted the spiritual center of gravity for many of the non-dGe-lugs-pa Buddhist traditions from West to East.³ Traditionally Khams had sent its ordinary monks and lamas to Central Tibet for teaching and ordination, whereas the high lamas of dBus and gTsang regularly paid visits to the relatively rich districts of Khams to teach and collect offerings. This general pattern continued, but by the late-18th century many of the greatest lamas of dBus and

gTsang were also beginning to seek out the practical instructions and Tantric lineages of these Khams-pa masters and to bring them back to Central Tibet.⁴

By the early 20th century, Khams had begun to transmit fresh impulses of life to other parts of Tibet also for the scholastic traditions of the non-dGe-lugs-pa schools. This new vitality was embodied in a teaching method which practically ignored debate (*rtsod pa*) and the debate-based compulsory scholastic manuals (*yig cha*), but rather laid its stress upon the direct reading and expounding of the Buddhist classics. This was the method of the 'exposition seminary' (*bshad-grwa*) in which a 'seminary master' (*mkhan po*) taught the main Indian Buddhist doctrinal and philosophical treatise (*rgya gzhung*) and also trained his students in how to expound them. The leading role in spreading this method was played by the great scholar and master gZhan-dga'.

gZhan-dga' was, however, no radical innovator. As a teacher he continued in most respects to follow a venerable tradition that he had inherited from his teachers.⁵ He had for general Mahāyāna studies mainly studied under O-rgyan bstan-'dzin nor-bu⁶ who had, like gZhan-dga' himself early in his career, taught at the retreat of dGe-mang in Byang rDza-chu-kha.⁷ And if anything, gZhan-dga' as a scholar was a conservative; what he aimed was to preserve a correct knowledge of the Buddhist tradition through a close reading and phrase-by-phrase explication of the fundamental sources. But to aid in the exposition of the thirteen fundamental classics of Indian Mahāyāna Buddhist doctrine and philosophy, gZhan-dga' wrote for his students a series of thirteen gloss-commentaries (*mchan 'grel*), which later became famed as the *gZhan dga'i mchan 'grel* and were published in several xylograph editions.⁸ In composing his brief gloss-explanations, he looked mainly to the basic Indian commentaries. These commentaries thus represented an attempt to cut through centuries of Tibetan secondary exegesis and debate, and to return to the canonical sources.

gZhan-dga' was, however, by no means ignorant of the previous Tibetan learned traditions. And when he did use Tibetan commentators, he preferred the writings of the greatest Sa-skyapa savants. Though originally from a Nyingma background, gZhan-dga' revered the Sakya learned tradition in general, and he was extremely fond of such great Sa-skyapa scholars of the past as Sakya Paṇḍita (1182–1251) and Go-rams-pa (1429–1489).⁹ It was indeed gZhan-dga' who first strongly encouraged his student sGa bla-ma 'Jam-dbyangs rgyal-mtshan (1870–1940) to publish the works of Go-rams-pa from xylograph blocks.¹⁰ gZhan-dga' had also received teachings from such contemporary Sa-skyapa masters as *dpon-slob* Blo-gter dbang-po (1847–1914)¹¹ (acting as assistant teacher [*skyor dpon*] for the latter at La-se ri-khrod) and sGa-ston Ngag-dbang legs-pa (1864–1941).¹² Some influential Sa-skyapa masters, including sGa-ston himself, considered gZhan-dga' to have been a latter-day emanation of Sa-skyapa Paṇḍita.

In 1918 gZhan-dga' served briefly as the founding seminary master of what was to become the famed rDzong-gsar scriptural seminary of Khams-bye bShad-sgrub-dar-rgyas-gling in Derge district, which had been established under the patronage of mKhyen-brtse Chos-kyi blo-gros (1896–1959).¹³ Before that, he had taught extensively at rDzogs-chen and then at dPal-dpungs (c.1910–1917?), where his main student and patron had been the 11th Si-tu Padma dbang-mchog rgyal-po (1886–1952).¹⁴

gZhan-dga' trained many influential disciples over the course of his teaching career. According to Dezhung Rinpoche, his most learned bKa'-brgyud student was

Gangs-dkar *sprul-sku*, who had also studied under Kong-sprul's student gNas-gsar bKra-shis chos-'phel, the dPal-spungs-dgon *mkhan-po*. His greatest Sa-skyapa students included sDe-gzhung *sprul-sku* A-'jam 'Jam-dbyangs kun-dga' bstan-pa'i rgyal-mtshan (1885–1952)¹⁵ and dBon-stod mKhyen-rab chos-kyi 'od-zer (1889–). Among his rNying-ma students, the most outstanding was gSer-mkhar Chos-grags.¹⁶ His main students continued his tradition in the seminaries which gradually sprung up at rDzong-gsar, dPal-spungs, sKye-rgu-mdo and in other parts of Khams.¹⁷

By c.1915 or 1920, gZhan-dga's activities had been noticed in some quarters in Central Tibet. The 'Bri-gung *skyabs-mgon* Zhi-ba'i blo-gros (1886–1943), for instance, repeatedly requested him to come and teach at 'Bri-gung, the main seat of the 'Bri-gung bKa'-brgyud school. gZhan-dga' himself never visited central Tibet, but in reply to these requests he eventually sent his disciple Ra-kho Chos-grags there. (The latter founded a flourishing seminary, and trained many 'Bri-gung and rNying-ma students, as well as monks from other bKa'-brgyud traditions.)¹⁸ Another student of gZhan-dga' was the master Sangs-rgyas bzang-po (b. 1894). This native of Khams spent the last years of his life in the southwest Tibetan borderlands including in the Nepalese territories Mustang and Thak khola, reviving the traditions of Buddhist learning there.¹⁹

gZhan-dga' himself apparently realized the great role his students could play in revitalizing Mahāyāna scriptural and philosophical studies also in the old Sa-skyapa monasteries of central Tibet (a few of his students had come from those monasteries all the way to Khams to study under him). gZhan-dga' is said in fact to have sent as teachers several of his main early students to the four main Sa-skyapa monastic seats in dBus and gTsang provinces: Ngor, Na-lendra, rTa-nag Thub-bstan and Sa-skyapa. Of these, the pupil he sent originally to Sa-skyapa – Brag-g.yab *bla-ma* Thub-bstan bzang-po – managed to stay the longest and to have the greatest success as a teacher. In the present paper I would therefore like to relate the main points of this teacher's life and career, as a record of the influence of gZhan-dga's tradition among the Sa-skyapa in Central Tibet. This account is mainly based on the recollections of the late *mkhan-po* Sangs-rgyas bstan-'dzin (c.1906–c.late 1980s), who, when interviewed at Ghoom in 1981, was Brag-g.yab Thub-bstan's last living major pupil.²⁰

The early studies of Brag-g.yab Thub-bstan

Brag-g.yab Thub-bstan-bzang-po was born in Khams Brag-g.yab in c.1891/92.²¹ He was originally from the Sa-skyapa monastery of gTsang-sar in Brag-g.yab. Thub-bstan bzang-po seems to have been his novice name, though he was known by it all his life. The name he received when taking full monk ordination was actually Thub-bstan rgyal-mtshan.

Brag-g.yab Thub-bstan's first major teacher was the Ngor *dpon-slob* Blo-gter-dbang-po (1847–1914), from whom he received the *Lam-'bras*.²² From this master he also learned many other tantric traditions of the Sa-skyapa, as well as such important Sa-skyapa scholastic works as Sa-skyapa Paṇḍita's great treatises the *Tshad ma rigs gter* and *sDom gsum rab dbye*.²³ Afterwards this master recognized the young Brag-g.yab Thub-bstan's intelligence and potential, and sent him from Derge to rDzogs-chen for further scholastic training under his own student, the great seminary master gZhan-dga'.

At the rDzogs-chen Śrī-siṃha seminary in the nearby nomadic region of rDza-chu-kha, Brag-g.yab Thub-bstan met the renowned seminary master, and under his guidance he applied himself very assiduously to his formal training. One of Thub-bstan bzang-po's 'classmates' at this time (c.1906?) was the Ngor Khang-gsar candidate to the abbacy (*zhabs drung*) Dam-pa Rinpoche Ngag-dbang blo-gros gzhan-phan snying-po (1876–1953, then known as 'Dam-pa-lags').²⁴ Also studying under gZhan-dga' during this period was sDe-gzhung *sprul-sku* A-'jam (1885–1952), along with sGa bla ma 'Jam-dbyangs rgyal-mtshan (1870–1940)²⁵ and the latter's younger brother dGe-'dun bzang-po.

The beginning of his teaching career in gTsang

After finishing just five or six years of studies, gZhan-dga' judged Brag-g.yab Thub-bstan to have completed his formal training. And in view of his personal qualities, gZhan-dga' in about 1914/15 decided to send him to Sa-skyā as a teacher.²⁶ Two other important students of gZhan-dga' who during these years also went to Central Tibet and taught were Mi-nyag A-dpal, who went to Ngor, and sDe-gzhung *sprul-sku* A-'jam, who went to Na-lendra. Mi-nyag A-dpal seems to have come to gTsang in about 1917, a bit later than Brag-g.yab Thub-bstan, and he tried to establish a scriptural seminary at Ngor. But he died just four years later, and thus his success was limited. Still later than Mi-nyag A-dpal was sDe-gzhung *sprul-sku* A-'jam, who went to Na-lendra in c.1920, though he returned to Khams within a year, partly due to problems with language (he spoke a very strong nomad dialect) and partly at the insistence of his father.²⁷ Brag-g.yab Thub-bstan, by contrast, ended up visiting and teaching at all three of those central Tibetan monastic seats (*gdan sa*). Though he was relatively short-lived (he died before reaching the age of forty), in the last fifteen years of his life he nevertheless succeeded in training a new generation of scholars who carried on his work.

Brag-g.yab Thub-bstan's journey to gTsang was a long and trying one. Although he was by then a qualified scholar of scripture and doctrine, he was not a high lama, but rather just an ordinary monk, and he was then a mere twenty-three or twenty-four years of age. He travelled the whole way from Khams on foot, carrying his books upon his back. Arriving at Sa-skyā, he gradually managed to set up classes in the great works of Indian Buddhism philosophy and scholastics. He attracted many bright students, and he taught at Sa-skyā for about five years (c.1915?–1920?).²⁸ While there, he reinstated a Sa-skyā-pa system of observing such Vinaya rites as the bi-monthly confession and the rainy season retreat.²⁹

Evidently the Vinaya reforms he introduced caused the jealousy and resentment of some older monks in Sa-skyā, including the current grand abbot of the Lha-khang chen-mo.³⁰ Then there also took place various intrigues in Sa-skyā between the two palaces, and as a result of this, the Sa-skyā *khri-pa* Drag-shul phrin-las rin-chen (1871–1936) withdrew his support from the small seminary that Brag-g.yab Thub-bstan had by then established.³¹ Already some time before this, one of Brag-g.yab Thub-bstan's first great disciples, Sangs-rgyas rin-chen (1897–1956),³² had been forced to leave Sa-skyā due to a similar internal dispute. (The latter in effect traveled ahead of Brag-g.yab Thub-bstan in later years, preparing the way, but leaving each place before his teacher arrived.) Brag-g.yab Thub-bstan finally had no choice but to leave Sa-skyā, too.

When he left, however, his teaching activities did not come to a sudden stop. Some forty students decided to leave with him. First he and his pupils went west to nearby Lha-rtse, where they received faithful support from the Lha-tse noble Kar-rgyal. Then he went a little further west and south to Dar Grang-mo-che, the old seat of Tshar-chen Blo-gsal rgya-mtsho (1502–1566), and there taught to his students Śāntideva's great Mahāyāna classic the *Bodhicaryāvatāra*. After this, he sent most of his forty monk-pupils back to Sakya. Then, in response to a request from a Sakya noble, he went to rGyang 'Bum-mo-che (a great stūpa built in the early 15th century by the Tibetan adept Thang-stong rgyal-po) and stayed there about six or seven months.

After this he was invited to rTa-nag Thub-bstan rnam-rgyal, the old seat of Go-rams-pa (1429–1489), where he established a small scriptural seminary (*bshad grwa*). While there, he had a vision of *kun-mkhyen* Go-rams-pa himself, who showed him the mystic syllable *a*, and empowering him to teach his works.³³

Then his old classmate Mi-nyag A-dpal, who had also come from Khams to teach in gTsang, passed away at Ngor. So Brag-g.yab Thub-bstan was invited to come there and succeed him as seminary master at the old seat of Ngor-chen Kun-dga' bzang-po (1382–1456). He accordingly went to Ngor, staying there two years (c.1920–21?) and teaching a number of students.

Teaching activities at 'Bras-yul sKyed-tshal

Then another of gZhan-dga's students, sGa *bla-ma* dGe-'dun bzang-po, arrived at Ngor from Khams.³⁴ During this time, 'Phags-pa-lha, an old monk from Sa-skya who had been one of Brag-g.yab Thub-bstan's disciples in Sa-skya, went on pilgrimage to Lhasa and on the way back stopped at 'Bras-yul south of the gTsang-po River in eastern gTsang. There he stayed awhile in retreat, but in the meantime, while talking with the leaders of the nearby 'Bras-yul sKyed-tshal monastery, he mentioned that if they could, they really should invite Brag-g.yab Thub-bstan to teach there. Now that dGe-'dun had come to Ngor, they had a perfect chance to invite Brag-g.yab Thub-bstan.

The old Thar-rtse *mkhan-po* 'Jam-dbyangs kun-bzang bstan-pa'i rgyal-mtshan (63rd Ngor abbot) consulted with Brag-g.yab Thub-bstan, and they both agreed that he should go to teach at 'Bras-yul sKyed-tshal, from which by then he had received a formal invitation. The four abbatial palaces (*bla brang*) and the regional dormitories of Ngor all wanted Brag-g.yab Thub-bstan to stay, but the Thar-rtse abbot had told him: 'What will be the use of both of you staying here at Ngor?' This helped convince Brag-g.yab Thub-bstan it would be better to go.³⁵

He therefore went to 'Bras-yul sKyed-tshal, the old seat of the great scholar 'Jam-dbyangs kun-dga' chos-bzang (1433–1503), staying there four years (c.1922–25?). While at sKyed-tshal he taught all thirteen of the great treatises (*gzhung chen*) for which gZhan-dga' had written commentaries. At that time there was a group of six monks from Sa-skya who studied under him. These included 'Phags-pa-lha,³⁶ *mkhan-chen* 'Jam-dpal bzang-po (1901–c.1960), bSam-yas *mkhan-po* Rin-chen bzang-po, and Sangs-rgyas bstan-'dzin (the main source of this account). The latter had been accompanying him continuously since rGyang 'Bum-mo-che.

From 'Bras-yul sKyed-tshal monastery, Brag-g.yab Thub-bstan then made a journey to dBus province. Travelling with him were a small group of students from his time at

rTa-nag and Bya-gshong. First they travelled east to the ancient monastery of bSam-yas. There he taught the *Discrimination of the Three Vows* (*sDom gsum rab dbye*) of Sa-skya Paṇḍita for several months, seated on the teaching throne of the 8th-century Indian abbot Bodhisattva Śāntarākṣita. At bSam-yas he also granted full monastic ordination to 'Jam-dpal bzang-po and Rin-chen bzang-po. In a branch monastery of bSam-yas at nearby Glo-bo Thon-thang, he expounded the *Madhyāntavibhāga* (*dBu mtha' rnam 'byed*) and the *Ratnagoṭravibhāga* (*rGyud bla ma*).

Then he and a few students travelled north to 'Phan-po where he visited Na-lendra, the great monastic seat of Rong-ston Shes-bya kun-rig (1367–1449). He remained there about three months, staying in the Tsha regional dormitory (*tsha kham tshan*). At that time he received from the bCo-brgyad *khri-chen* Rin-chen mkhyen-brtse'i dbang-po (1869–1927) the 'transference of consciousness' (*'pho ba*) instructions of Rong-ston and the initiation for the deity Seng-gdong-ma.

Then he returned to sKyed-tshal, and stayed one year (c.1926?). That winter he remained mainly in meditative seclusion in the retreat chapel (*sgrub khang*) of Kham-pu-lung-pa, situated just below sKyed-tshal. But during breaks in his practices he used to give some instruction to disciples.

Return to western gTsang

Then he was invited back to 'Dar Grang-mo-che in western gTsang by his Lha-rtse patrons. He stayed there for one year (c.1927?). His patrons promised him their full support for permanently establishing a seminary there, but he did not accept. He anticipated trouble from the administration of the great dGe-lugs-pa monastery bKra-shis lhun-po, which was quite heavy-handed in exerting its political influence in western gTsang. At that time he composed a commentary to Sa-skya Paṇḍita's collection of wise sayings, the *Sa skya legs bshad*, and gave this to his patron.³⁷

The Na-lendra monk Ngag-dbang blo-gros (later known as 'Ngag-blo Rinpoche') was among the group of about eighteen monk students then studying under him that year in 'Dar Grang-mo-che. Also present was Grags-pa rdo-rje from rTa-nag.

Then he returned to eastern gTsang and to 'Bras-yul sKyed tshal. As soon as he arrived there, he was invited a second time to Na-lendra. The monks of 'Bras-yul skyed-tshal called a general assembly, and they unanimously requested him to stay and to teach them permanently. They were willing to make over to him the whole monastery as their offering, if he would just agree to stay.

He could not, however, accept their request, and he lectured them instead about impermanence. But he did tell them, 'If I come back, then we can discuss it further.'

His final years at Na-lendra

Then he was invited to Na-lendra, where he stayed for about three years (c.1928–30?).³⁸ His main patron and inviter was the gZim-'og Byams-pa ngag-dbang kun-dga' bstan-'dzin phrin-las (1884–1965?). When he began to teach at Na-lendra, about one hundred and twenty students gathered from elsewhere, and there were already sixty students at the Na-lendra dialectical seminary, as dictated by a monastic ordinance. This seminary had been established (in c.1860) in the time of the previous gZim-'og *sprul sku* bsTan-'dzin snyan-grags (d. 1884), as part of the latter's reordering of

Na-lendra.³⁹ For their studies, they used some of Rong-ston's scholastic manuals (*yig cha*), but basically the instructions followed gZhan-dga's tradition.⁴⁰ Everywhere else he had been, Brag-g.yab Thub-bstan had taught four sessions per day but here he gave three lessons per day: one for the advanced, one for intermediate students, and one for beginners. In the afternoon he would attend the debates in the dialectical school (*mtshan nyid bslab grwa*).

Brag-g.yab Thub-bstan was very skillful in how he taught his students, and he was very kind-hearted. Sometimes when a student would give a particularly bad exposition of a scriptural passage he would not scold the student, but would quietly weep. This made the students really want to work hard. In all the years they were together, Sangs-rgyas bstan-'dzin never heard a mean or harsh word from his mouth. The master was very devoted to teaching and practice, and not to worldly things. He once actually asserted himself: 'I have no attachment to material things, except to my own bowl of parched barley flour (*rtsam-pa*)!'

Then, at the end of his third year in Na-lendra, Brag-g.yab Thub-bstan developed a bad toothache. Nothing else was wrong with his health, it seemed. He went to sPa-tshab, the old seat of the early Tibetan Mādhyamika sPa-tshab Nyi-ma-grags (b. 1055) located in the same district of 'Phan-po, and there he recovered. Then he came back to Na-lendra, and when he was there, again his toothache returned, and it got worse. He was then teaching the *Mahāyānasūtrālamkāra* (*mDo sde rgyan*). His disciples performed many rituals for his longevity, and they also brought a doctor to treat him. The latter said: 'No medical treatment will help. This is caused by the sorcery of dGa'-ldan.'⁴¹

Then he was invited to rGya-gling Tshogs-pa south of Lhasa in the Dra-nang valley of Lho-kha.⁴² One of his students at the time was a rNying-ma *sprul-sku* from there. He therefore agreed to come. But then the Na-lendra monks strongly resisted his leaving. He told them, 'Alright. If you at Na-lendra will stop the practice of letting the nomad patrons slaughter sheep and yaks near the monastery, then I will stay.' This they agreed to do.

It was by then the lunar New Year,⁴³ and he was still teaching the *Mahāyānasūtrālamkāra* (*mDo sde rgyan*). On the fifth day of the month he finished the 'fruit' (*'bras bu*) chapter, and he stopped teaching then, saying to his students: 'This is enough for you.'

On the ninth day of the month he asked his attendants. 'It has snowed, hasn't it?'

They answered, 'No, sir, it hasn't.'

'But it is the tenth of the month, isn't it?'

'No, sir, it's the ninth,' they replied.

On the next day he asked again whether it had snowed. By then a great snowfall had indeed fallen, and his students reported this to him. Soon thereafter, he passed away.

His five main students

Brag-g.yab Thub-bstan while still living had appointed five of his disciples as assistant teachers, and these were the ones who also received some of his books after his death. They were: Ngag-blo Rinpoche (1892–c.1959), 'Jam-dpal bzang-po (1901–c.1960), Rin-chen bzang-po, Grags-pa rdo-rje of rTa-nag, and Sangs-rgyas bstan-'dzin. These students performed for the next forty-nine days the final rites for their master.

From among his five main students, 'Jam-dpal bzang-po was held by consensus to be the best. He was therefore requested to stay at Na-lendra and continue in the position of seminary master. He agreed to do so, but only for a short time and not permanently. After fifty days and the final rites were completed, the main students dispersed. 'Jam-dpal bzang-po then took his leave and returned to Sa-skya. He is said to have become abbot of the Sa-skya Lha-khang chen-mo a few years later in 1934. His fellow student under Brag-g.yab Thub-bstan, Sangs-rgyas rin-chen, became abbot of the same monastery in 1948.⁴⁴

Ngag-blo Rinpoche stayed at Na-lendra, where he took over the position of seminary *mkhan-po*. He soon distinguished himself very much there. Already in 1930 and 1931 he was also tutoring the young bCo-brgyad khri-chen in Tibetan grammar and the *Bodhicāryāvātāra*.⁴⁵ Twelve years later, in 1943, he instructed the same lama in the *Abhidharmakośa* and the '*Jam dbyangs bla ma'i dgongs rgyan* of Ngag-dbang legs-grub (b. 1811) at Na-lendra. In the next year he taught him the *Madhyamakāvītāra* and *Abhisamayālamkāra*. Then in late 1944, Ngag-blo Rinpoche was called to Sa-skya by the sGrol-ma pho-brang *bdag-chen* Ngag-dbang kun-dga' rin-chen (1902–1952) to perform rituals for encouraging the conception of a son.⁴⁶ Later Ngag-blo also served as the *zhabs brtan bla ma* for the sGrol-ma pho-brang.

The remaining three chief students of Brag-g.yab Thub-bstan – namely, Rin-chen bzang-po, Grags-pa rdo-rje, and Sangs-rgyas bstan-'dzin – went back to 'Bras-yul sKyed-tshal, where they stayed for one year. Then four of them (i.e. including 'Jam-dpal bzang-po?) were invited to come together and stay at Bya-gshong near Sa-skya. This they did, and they stayed there another year, continuing their study and teaching.⁴⁷ In later years Rin-chen bzang-po went on to become abbot of bSam-yas.⁴⁸

Sangs-rgyas bstan-'dzin returned in his 26th year (1931?) to Sa-skya, where he found a school for debating still functioning, based on the manuals of Ngag-dbang chos-grags, but no exposition seminar. The old dispute between the palaces that had forced Brag-g.yab Thub-bstan out had blocked the permanent establishment of a *bshad grwa*. Sangs-rgyas bstan-'dzin later served as seminary master of rTa-nag Thub-bstan rnam-rgyal and elsewhere in gTsang, before fleeing Tibet [in] 1959 and being appointed 'abbot of Sa-skya' while residing in exile at Ghoom, a short distance from Darjeeling. It was at Ghoom that he passed away, one of the most senior and highly revered monks of his tradition.

Notes

- 1 According to his student Dezhung Rinpoche (1906–1987), as recorded in May 1961 by E. Gene Smith, gZhan-dga' was a rDzogs-chen-pa born at Khu-na in a nomadic district ('*brog sde*) of rDza-chu-kha. This place was located about two or three days walk from Jyekundo to the northeast, on route to Zi-ling. There was a dGe-lugs-pa monastery at Khu-na. rGyal-khang-tshang was gZhan-dga's family name. His other names were 'Jigs-med thub-bstan dge-legs and dByangs-can dgyes-pa'i rdo-rje. mKhyen-rab chos-kyi 'od-zer wrote a biography of his master gZhan-dga', which Dezhung Rinpoche had never actually seen, but had heard about. Dezhung Rinpoche himself had studied under gZhan-dga' for nine months at Jyekundo in 1920. For a more recent sketch of gZhan-dga's life, see Blo-gros phun-tshogs's history of the rDzong-gsar Khams-bye seminary: *Khams bye bshad grwa'i lo rgyus mdo tsam brjod pa* (Hereafter *Khams bye*), *Krung go'i bod kyi shes rig*, vol. 18–1 (1992, pp. 119–21).

- 2 It should be added that even in the dGe-lugs-pa order most of the truly outstanding figures during these centuries came from Khams and A-mdo, though they went for their higher training to the great Central Tibetan monasteries and often stayed to teach there.
- 3 On this, the so-called *ris-med* ‘universalist’ movement, see for instance E. Gene Smith (1970).
- 4 An example of this was the Ngor Khang-gsar *mkhan-po* Ngag-dbang bsod-nams rgyal-mtshan (1830s–1890s), who studied under many Khams-pa masters during his stay there in the period c.1867–75. See his life story in Blo-gter dbang-po’s addendum to the *Ngor gdan rabs*, ff. 67a–70a.
- 5 The great master Rong-ston (1367–1449) was one of the most famous exponents of this method in all of Tibet. The final instructions he gave to his students at Na-lendra before his death included the advice to concentrate on exposition and learning (*’chad-nyan*) with a doctrinal (i.e. Buddhist religious) motivation. By day they were to expound and learn sūtras and the great doctrinal treatises. They were not to indulge then in purely logical banter typical of *bsdus-ra* debate. In the evening they were to practice the clamorous presentation of scripture and reasoning [in debate]. See Shākya mchog-ldan, *rJe btsan*, p. 361. 6 *’o bstan pa la bsam pa’i bshad nyan dgos pa yin / rang re’i dgon pa ’dir yang nyin mi mdo dang / bstan bcos chen po rnam nyan bshad mdzad dgos / khyod khyod rang dang / khyod ma yin khyod ces ma zer / mtshan mo lung dang rigs pa’i rnam gzhag ’ur chil le ba gyis /*. See also Jackson (1988: XIII), where I have paraphrased this section. Also in the 15th century one finds mention of three different ‘classes’ in the monastic curriculum. In addition to the basic class of logic and debate (*bsdus-ra*), there was both a ‘reasoning [i.e. debating] class’ (*rigs-ra*) and an ‘text [exposition] school’ (*lung-ra*). See Shākya-mchog-ldan, *Rang lugs*, p. 567.3, and Jackson (1987: 151, n. 28): *col med col chung khyed cag gi // bsdus ra’i bsdus skad de ’dra na // lung ra’i lung chos ci ’byung shes / rigs ra’i rigs pa’ang de tar go //*
The exposition tradition, however, had much declined in the great Central Tibetan institutions, and almost exclusive attention was devoted to the *bdus-ra* and debating-based curriculum.
- 6 He was otherwise called dBon-po bsTan-li or bsTan-dga’.
- 7 O-rgyan bstan-’dzin nor-bu’s main master had been rDza dPal-sprul, and he had been the nephew of Byang rDza-chu dGe-mang *mkhan-po* gZhan phan mtha’-yas. gZhan-dga’ was counted by some to have been the rebirth of the dGe-mang *mkhan-po*. This information on gZhan-dga’s teachers was told to Gene Smith by Dezhung Rinpoche in the early 1960s. See E. Gene Smith (1969), vol. 2, p. 202. Further interesting mentions of O-rgyan bstan-’dzin nor-bu and his successors are given by Dezhung Rinpoche in his *’Jam rgyal rnam thar*, pp. 8b–9a and 10a–b.
- 8 Two well-known editions were at dPal-spungs in Khams and ’Bri-gung in Central Tibet. The ’Bri-gung edition has been reprinted as: *gZhung chen bcu gsum gyi mchan ’grel: Commentaries Expanding the Texts of the Chief Indic Buddhist Sāstras in their Tibetan Translations* (Dehra Dun: D. G. Khochen Tulku, 1978). Many of these works were also printed from blocks in Bhutan and Manali. gZhan-dga’ also wrote a similar commentary on the fundamental rNying-ma Tantra *rGyud gsang ba sgying po*
- 9 gZhan-dga’ himself composed a verse expressing these sentiments: *e ma snga ’gyur bstan pa’i chos sgor zhugs // ’phags yul mkhas pa’i gzhung la cung zad sbyangs // phyogs lhung med par sems kyis brtag byas pas // dpal ldan sa skya’i chos la yid ches brnyed //*
- 10 The story of the carving of this edition is told in some detail by Dezhung Rinpoche, *’Jam rgyal rnam thar*, pp. 25–37 (13a–19a).
- 11 His biography by bSam-gtan blo-gros, entitled *gSang bdag rdo rje ’dzin pa ’jam dbyangs blo gter dbang po’i rnam par thar pa cha tsam brjod pa mchog sbyin sgo gsum rang grol dge legs nor bu’i ljon bzang skal bzang lha yi dga’ston*, was published with the Lam ’bras slob bshad, vol. 8 (*nya*), pp. 237–335.
- 12 sDe-gzhung sprul-sku A-’jam wrote the following biography of sGa-ston Ngag-dbang legs-pa: *rje bla ma rdo rje ’chang ngag dbang kun dga’ legs pa’i ’byung gnas ye shes rgyal mtshan dpal bzang po’i rnam par thar pa ngo mtshar nor bu’i phreng ba* (New Delhi, Gonpo Dorje, 1981.) To supplement this biography, Dezhung Rinpoche (1906–1987) composed the work *rje btsun bla ma rdo rje ’chang ’jam mgon ngag dbang legs pa rin po che’i rnam thar ngo mtshar nor bu’i phreng bai’ zhal skong rin chen rgyan mdzes*. Delhi T. G. Dhongthog Rinpoche, 1990.

- 13 See Blo-gros phun-tshogs's history of the rDzong-gsar Khams-bye seminary: *Khams-bye*, pp. 119–21.
- 14 See the biography of the *si-tu* by Zur-mang bsTan-'dzin *sprul-sku Kun gzigs rdo rje 'chang skyabs mgon tā yi si tu padma dbang mchog rgyal po'i rnam thar che tsam brjod pa ngo mtshar nor bu'i* (Gangtok, 1976), pp. 53.1, 54.1, 56.1 ff.
- 15 A print of the Derge edition of the full-length biography of A-'jam Rinpoche by Phrin-las chos-phel has recently been located in Khams by *mkhan-po* A-pad Yon-tan bzang-po (b. 1927). Its full title is: *rJe bla ma 'jam dbyangs kun dga' bstan pa'i rgyal mtshan gyi rnam par thar pa byin rlabs rgya mtsho ngo mtshar gter mdzod*. It was carved onto printing blocks at both Jyekundo and Derge, and the Derge print has been republished by Ngawang Topgyal, New Delhi, 1992.
- 16 gSer-mkhar Chos-grags was one of the main disciples who received the *Lam-'bras* from Ngag-dbang legs-pa (1864–1941) in Mi-nyag in 1928. See Dezhung Rinpoche, *sGa ston rnam thar*, p. 43a.
- 17 By the early 1930s, even the monastery of Tharlam in sGa Thag-lung had its own seminary headed by two scholars trained in rDzong-gsar.
- 18 I hope that my colleague Mr. Ngawang Tsering will record some details of this teacher's career.
- 19 His biography, entitled *Sangs rgyas bzang po'i rnam thar shes bya ba'i [= yi?] me long* was mentioned by G. Tucci (1956), pp. 13–14, who could not date Sangs-rgyas bzang-po but stated that he was 'responsible for the revival of Lamaism in the district.' I am grateful to Dr Franz-Karl Ehrhard for this reference.
- 20 The following information, when not otherwise indicated, is based on these interviews with *mkhan-po* Sangs-rgyas bstan-'dzin at Ghoom in late December 1981. I believe these reminiscences are the only surviving record of Brag-g.yab Thub-bstan's career.
- 21 According to Sangs-rgyas bstan-'dzin, he died in about 1928 at the age of 'thirty-nine' (which may have been his thirty-ninth year). But other sources from Nalendra have told me he died in about 1931. If the latter date is accurate, then his birth-date must be moved forward by three years.
- 22 This great master was an eminent disciple of 'Jam-dbyangs mkhyen-brtse'i dbang-po, and he carried out many major printing projects at Derge, including the *Lam 'bras slob bshad*.
- 23 Blo-gter dbang-po had written a gloss-commentary on the *Tshad ma rigs gter*. See Jackson 1983: 12, no. 21.
- 24 T. G. Dhongthog Rinpoche has written a biography of this master which was published with the Indian reprint of the *Lam 'bras slob bshad*, vol. 8 (*nya*), pp. 389–414. It is entitled: *rje btsun bla ma dpal e wam khang gsar mkhan chen ngag dbang blo gros gzhan phan snying po'i' rnam thar mdor bsdus dad pa'i dbyangs snyan*.
- 25 Dezhung Rinpoche, *'Jam rgyal rnam thar*, gives Dezhung Rinpoche's own account of 'Jam-rgyal's life. For a briefer sketch of his life, see Blo-gros phun-tshogs's history of the rDzong-gsar Khams-bye seminary: *Khams bye*, p. 121.
- 26 If this dating is accurate, then he would seem to have studied under gZhan-dga' not only at rDzogs-chen, but also at dPal-spungs during the period 1906–1912.
- 27 The biographer Phrin-las chos-phel, p. 108 (54b) explains A-'jam Rinpoche's other reasons for going to Central Tibet and Na-lendra. Sangs-rgyas bstan-'dzin mentions sDe-gzhung A-'jam as an instance of a student of gZhan-dga' who tried to establish that lineage in Central Tibet. But the other sources on *sprul-sku* A-'jam's life do not clearly mention that he had meant to stay and teach a long time there. On the other hand, they do state that he was restricted in time due to his father's wish to return quickly to Khams. sDe-gzhung A-'jam's teacher and uncle, sDe-gzhung *sprul-sku* Lung-rigs nyi-ma (1840s–1898) is also said to have had problems while teaching at Nalendra, because of his nomad speech and habits.
- 28 Sangs-rgyas bstan-'dzin further related that during Brag-g.yab Thub-bstan's third year at Sa-skyia, he had a vision of Sa-skyia Paṇḍita in which the latter prophesied to him his future activities. Later at De-chog (a place near Sa-skyia [?] where *rje-btsun* Grags-pa had stayed), he had a second vision of Sa-skyia Paṇḍita, in which he heard from him the '*Shes bya ma*' invocation verses of the latter's classic on Buddhist logic, the *Tshad ma rigs gter*. It was a matter of great regret that *bla ma* Thub-bstan never taught the *Rigs gter*.

- 29 According to Sangs-rgyas bstan-'dzin, a major revival and reformation of Vinaya practice at Sa-skya had been carried through long before by *sngags-'chang* Kun-dga' rin-chen (1517–1584), in which lay-people (especially the *ser khim* 'lay priests) were expelled from the monastic assembly of the southern monastery. Then, during the period of Pañ-chen Chos-kyi rgyal-mtshan (1570–1662), a lama who had taught at Sa-skya as a tutor to the *khri-pa* had established the tradition of observing the *gso-sbyong* ritual according to a dGe-lugs-pa (especially Tashilhunpo) tradition. *Bla-ma* Thub-bstan, however, changed the *gso-sbyong* ritual back to a Sa-skya one, and he reestablished regular observance of the rainy season retreat.
- 30 Kaḥ-thog *si-tu* Chos-kyi rgya-mtsho (1880–1925) visited Sa-skya in late 1919, arriving there on the 15th of the 9th lunar month. This Khams-pa lama and pilgrim actually recorded some of these matters, as found in the record of his pilgrimage: *Gangs ljongs dbus gtsang gnas skor lam yig nor bu zla shel gyi se mo* (Tashijong, 1972), p. 441. 6–442.1 (221a–b). He stated: 'Now for dialectic studies the scholastic manuals of Ngag-dbang chos-grags are being studied as a mere tax (? text unclear). Recently some of the annotation-commentaries of the rDzogs-chen mkhan-po gZhan-dga' arrived. But when the student of gZhan-dga' known as the 'gTsang-sar *bla-ma*' [the name by which Brag-g.yab Thub-bstan was known in Sa-skya] said that the pieced-together lower robe (*sham thabs le'u ma* should be worn by the main body of monks, the Lha-khang *mkhan-po* out of jealousy forbade this. When this transpired, the gTsang-sar *bla-ma* sat there and wept. There were also many who did not like the new studies.' The Tibetan: *da lta mtshan nyid ngag chos pa'i spyi (?) ma thal rnams khral tsam l nye dus rdzogs chen mkhan zhan phan pa'i rgya mchan kha shas sleb bo ll 'on kyang sham thabs le'u ma grwa mang gis gyon rgyus byas par lha khang mkhan pos gtsang sar bla mar hrag dog gis gyon mi chog rgyu byas pas mkhan gzan phan pa'i slob ma gtsang sar bla ma ni bshum nas 'dug go ll slob gnyer gsar pa la mi mos mkhan kyang mang ngo ll*. Kaḥ-thog *si-tu* on p. 449 (225a) described a certain amount of laxity in the observance of the Vinaya rules even among some of the monks of the southern monastery (the Lha-khang chen-mo), though the monks there were called 'Dul-ba-pa.' In the monasteries to the north side of the river, he found 'married-priest' villagers (*ser khyim grong pa*), who were known as 'gSang-sngags-pa.' He described the peculiar hair and dress of some 'nuns' here, whom he compared with the long-haired Bo-dong nuns. In all, he felt quite depressed by what he saw on both the north and south sides of Sa-skya, taking it to be a sign that the destruction of the Dharma was rapidly approaching.
- 31 This may have happened in c.1919, after the 39th *khri-pa*, 'Dzam-gling che-rgu dbang-sdud (1855–1919), passed away. It appears that the Phun-tshogs pho-brang had initially supported the scriptural seminar.
- 32 Later a very influential *mkhan-po* of the Sa-skya Lha-khang chen-mo, and tutor of the Phun-tshogs pho-brang bDag-chen 'Jigs-bral.
- 33 Another of gZhan-dga's students, Go-'jo Khu-phug-mkhan gZhan-phan legs-grub, is said to have revived the teaching traditions at the seminary at rTa-nag. But I am not sure whether he came there before or after Brag-g.yab Thub-bstan's brief visit.
- 34 *Bla-ma* dGe-'dun had been an assistant teacher of gZhan-dga' at Jyekundo in 1920. As mentioned above, he was the younger brother of sGa *bla-ma* 'Jam-dbyangs rgyal-mtshan (1870–1940).
- 35 dGe-'dun bzang-po, who was known as a very strict and demanding teacher, evidently met only limited success teaching at Ngor. By that time Ngor had become a place where monks from affiliated monasteries would go to get ordination and to receive the *Lam 'bras*, but not to study philosophical or doctrinal treatises.
- 36 He was evidently the same as the bSod-rgyal who served as Thub-bstan's attendant and later was a teacher of mKhas-btsun bzang-po.
- 37 In later years, Sangs-rgyas bstan-'dzin searched for this work but could never locate a copy.
- 38 As mentioned above, gZhan-dga's pupil sDe-gzhung *sprul-sku* A-'jam had previously visited Na-lendra (in c.1920), though he had not stayed very long.
- 39 See Jackson 1989; pp. 30 and 52, n. 86.
- 40 One would assume that the exposition traditions of Khams were primarily survivals of traditions going back to Rong-ston or other Sa-skya-pa masters. On the indebtedness of

- similar bKa'-brgyud-pa learned traditions to Rong-ston, see Kong-sprul Blo-gros mtha'-yas, *Theg pa'i sgo kun las btus pa . . . Shes bya kun khyab*, pt. 1, p. 503 (om 174b)
- 41 It was believed to be the remainders of the curse (*mthu ro*) that had been placed upon Na-lendra in earlier times. On this aspect of Na-lendra's history, see Jackson 1989: pp. 22–25.
- 42 This was the seat of one of the four old monastic communities of Kha-che Paṅ-chen Śākyaśrībhadrā, who visited Tibet in the early 13th century.
- 43 Of the iron-horse year, 1930?
- 44 J. Schoening 1983: p. 331.
- 45 Khetsun Sangpo, *Biographical Dictionary of Tibet*, vol. II, p. 590.
- 46 Khetsun Sangpo, *Biographical Dictionary of Tibet*, vol. II, pp. 563–4.
- 47 After this, Sangs-rgyas bstan-'dzin went to Shangs Sreg-shing, where, he said, there is the real *gar gzigs ma* image of Manjusri painted by Sa-pan. Later on, Sangs-rgyas bstan-'dzin seems to have served a *mkhan-po* of the seminaries at rTa-nag and Bya-gshong.
- 48 Since the mid-1300s, at least, the abbots of bSam-yas were appointed from Sa-skya.

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THE JAPANESE IN TIBET

Scott Berry

Source: S. Berry, 'Prologue' in *Monks, Spies and a Soldier of Fortune: The Japanese in Tibet*, London: The Athlone Press, 1995, pp. 1-5.

During the first half of the twentieth century, Tibet began to open its doors to a fascinated West. When Colonel Younghusband led his expeditionary force to Lhasa in 1904, a team of journalists went along and in no time were producing books about their experiences. A British survey team was given access to previously unmapped areas of Tibet, and British Trade Agents were placed in the Chumbi Valley, in Gyantse, and in Gartok in the west. Lhasa, however, remained stubbornly out of bounds after Younghusband's departure, and it was not until 1920 that Sir Charles Bell, for many years a close friend of the Dalai Lama, was allowed to go there and live there for a year.

Meanwhile, it went practically unnoticed that Lhasa had a number of Japanese residents including Buddhist monks, spies, adventurers, and one soldier of fortune; for just as Britain and Russia played out their Great Game, Japan played its own. Theirs was smaller, and was conducted almost entirely by individuals, since there never really was any clear Japanese government policy, and in the end whatever potential lay in relations between these two Buddhist countries was never realized. What remains are the stories of the men who pitted themselves against the physical and cultural obstacles presented by Tibet.

In not a single case was any sort of expedition mounted: each one went alone, backed at most by a temple or a sympathetic group of friends at home. Even the secret agents (some of whom proved the least competent of the lot) were expected to make their own way under cover. So these men present us with a face of Japan not often seen, as a country and culture best known for its group activities and its follow-the-leader mentality, here produced a group of solitary travellers who would have to be considered remarkable for any time or culture.

It is also noteworthy that none of these travellers took any scientific instruments along. While the West insisted on mapping, measuring and categorizing everything that came under its scrutiny, the future world leaders in technology and gadgetry opted for involvement on a personal level.

As early as 1899, two Buddhist monks named Kawaguchi Ekai and Nomi Kan were separately trying to find ways into Tibet from Nepal and China respectively. They shared a number of traits: absolute and uncompromising determination, super-human scholarship, a belief that Buddhism's time was at hand, and a horror of sex.

They also shared the same teacher, a venerable sage named Nanjo Bunyu, the father of modern Japanese Sanskrit studies, who had taken the usual step of going to the West to learn about the East, studying for eight years under Max Mueller at Oxford.

In the end it was Kawaguchi who would almost miraculously survive the many trials of his bizarre adventure to haphazardly complete the most successful exploration of Tibet to date by any foreigner. Nomi, meanwhile, was to make three unsuccessful attempts, only to be turned back by suspicious officials, bandits, and destitution. His eventual fate will probably never be known for certain.

While these two starry-eyed priests searched for lost scriptures and harboured dreams of a worldwide Buddhist revival, a more secular Japanese presence was beginning to manifest itself. Accompanying Nomi on his first try in 1899 were two companions who had been foisted on him by the Japanese Legation in Peking. They were Narita Yasuteru, in the pay of the Japanese Foreign Ministry, and Teramoto Enga, a priest of a rather different stamp from Kawaguchi and Nomi (in spite of having also been taught by Nanjo Bunyu). Narita soon retired on the lame excuse that he had nothing with him suitable as a gift for the Dalai Lama, but Teramoto was an altogether more persistent character. Though he made only a brief trip to Tibet in 1905 and spent most of his time in China, he was probably to have more influence over Tibetan-Japanese relations than any other individual. Working at different times with the Japanese military and the diplomatic corps, as well as with the Higashi Honganji sect and its rival ultra-nationalist Nishi Honganji, he seems to have been a bit of a freelance diplomat. His connection with the Nishi Honganji was particularly important, for it marked the first active participation in relations with Tibet by that sect's fanatically xenophobic, racist and nationalist abbot, Count Otani Kozui.

Then, at the end of 1910 a very odd character turned up in Chamdo in eastern Tibet. With hair down to his shoulders, a long handlebar moustache, and a rucksack with a sign on his back declaring himself to be the head of the 'World Travelling Society (Without Funds)', Yajima Yasujiro appears to have been more than half a century ahead of his time. When the British, always alert for those they considered to be poaching on their territory, learned that he was a Russo-Japanese War veteran, and that he had worked his way across China partly by giving *kendo* lessons to Japanese troops stationed in Chengdu, they were quick to suspect him of being a spy. They seem not to have learned that he had also worked in a Chinese laundry and peddled patent medicines. It might also have eased their suspicions had they discovered that he had obtained his discharge from the army by feigning madness.

At this point Yajima was about a year into what was meant to be a round-the-world trip, but Tibet so captivated him that though he did eventually go nearly around the world, it was only to come right back to Tibet the next year after a stop of only two days in Japan.

Yajima ushered in the second decade of the century, and the one that was to belong to the Japanese in Tibet. When Sir Charles Bell returned from his year-long residence in Lhasa in 1921, he wrote, with understandable satisfaction:

It was an especial pleasure to think that I was the first European who had ever visited Lhasa at the invitation of the people themselves. . . . As matters

turned out I was destined to stay there longer than any other Westerner had stayed for a hundred and seventy-five years.

(Bell, Sir C. A., *Portrait of a Dalai Lama: The Life and Times of the Great Thirteenth*, London 1946/1987, p. 253)

This was, of course, true enough as far as it went, for the men who had outdone him in every respect were not 'Westerners'. Aoki Bunkyo and Tada Tokan, representing Count Otani, hereditary abbot of one of Japan's largest sects and cousin by marriage to the emperor, had also gone as a result of an invitation from the Dalai Lama. Kawaguchi made his return trip to Shigatse and Lhasa as a result of a similar one from the Panchen Lama. Yajima may have entered stealthily, but he remained there with the blessing of the Tibetan government. All of them stayed longer than Bell's year, and Tada, in fact, was there for ten.

The association between the Dalai Lama and Count Otani's two representatives is given only passing mention by Tibetan historians, while the British do their best to ignore it altogether. In Japanese eyes, both these men were great successes, rising to high positions as trusted advisers to Tibet's spiritual and political leader. It is most likely that the Dalai Lama, in his quest to bring his country into the twentieth century while retaining its independence, saw in Japan a supposedly Buddhist country which had done just that but could in itself pose a threat, for he kept the envoys at arm's length while using them to satisfy his curiosity.

Of the two, Tada was a genuine religious scholar who spent most of his time engrossed in his studies at one of Lhasa's great monasteries. His relations with his colleague Aoki were often cool because of the latter's rumoured liaison with a Lhasa widow. At any rate, Aoki's motives were almost wholly secular. Among other things he translated military manuals into Tibetan, claims to have designed the Tibetan national flag, and was sent on a mission to buy machine guns for the Tibetan army.

On New Year's Day 1915, the most important holiday of the Japanese year, it is said that the four Japanese in Lhasa – two teetotal celibates, one worldly priest, and an earthy soldier of fortune – met for a New Year's party. It is a pity that no one left a first-hand account.

This promising decade for Japanese-Tibetan relations was to come to nothing after Count Otani was disgraced in 1914. Though his ultra-nationalist motives in Tibet may have been suspect, he was at least aware of the country's importance, and without him guiding the politics of his wealthy sect and liaising with the government, the Japanese would hardly notice the Land of the Snows again until it began to figure in their military plans during World War II.

By the time they got around to acting, it would – perhaps fortunately – be too little too late. In 1939 an agent was sent disguised as a Mongolian, and with very vague instructions. But though he stayed more than a year, mostly in Shigatse, he left having learned next to nothing. The next Japanese to live in Lhasa would be two spies, Kimura Hisao and Nishikawa Kazumi, who had so lost sight of their mission that they did not even arrive in Lhasa until after the war was over. They were, however, between them not only to make two of the most remarkable overland journeys of the twentieth century, but over the next five years were to be eyewitnesses to the last days of an independent Tibet before the long Chinese night fell.

This is a surprising list of travellers to have remained so little known. Kawaguchi, Tada and Nishikawa made extensive studies of Tibetan Buddhism long before this became fashionable in the West. Kawaguchi, Kimura and Nishikawa were travellers as distinguished as any; Kawaguchi and Yajima were eccentrics the British might proudly have claimed; while Teramoto and Aoki were political schemers who would not have been out of place in a Kipling novel.

Just why they have remained so little known is difficult to say, but it is probably a combination of language difficulties and disillusion with Japanese militarism. In Japan itself they are little better known than they are in the West. In their determination not to face up to the past, and to ignore their disgraceful record in Asia, the Japanese have even confined to obscurity the individuals in whom they could have justifiable pride.

But this is more than the story of nine men: it is also the story of early-twentieth-century Tibet and its years of independence as it tried to learn how to relate to the rest of the world. It is, as well, a forgotten chapter in Japanese history that did not quite come off. Perhaps, as Tibet again moves slowly and hopefully toward independence, the accomplishments, as well as the failures, of these men may take on a new relevance.

THE DALAI LAMA: LHASA, 1921

Sir Charles Bell

Source: *The Journal of the Central Asian Society* XI(1) (1924): pp. 36–50.

A MEETING of the Central Asian Society was held at the Royal United Services Institution, Whitehall, London, S.W., on Thursday, November 8. The President of the Society, the Right Hon. Sir Maurice de Bunsen, was in the chair, and the principal speaker was Sir Charles Bell.

The CHAIRMAN: Ladies and Gentlemen, – I will not keep you a minute more than to say that our lecturer this evening is Sir Charles Bell, who, I suppose, more than anyone living, has had constant and continued experience of Tibet and Tibetan conditions. He has been for many years Political Resident in Sikkim and Bhutan and Tibet. He has made journeys to Gyantse and many other parts of the country. He has entered into intimate relations with the Dalai Lama, who, I believe, looks upon him as a personal friend. He has mastered the Tibetan language, has a great knowledge of Tibetan history and literature, and, in fact, I can conceive of no one more able to enlighten us upon present conditions there. I may mention that his first introduction, I believe, to that country, was in the capacity of a member of Sir Francis Younghusband's first mission to Lhasa in 1904, of which we all know as a great historical event, which raised the veil from that mystic city and caused us to take an increasing interest in the fortunes of that country. That was the time when its independence appeared to be seriously threatened by Russia – a fear which was dispelled, by the results of Sir Francis Younghusband's Mission. I believe that we are not going to dwell particularly on the political aspects of that, but I am sure that Sir Charles Bell will have many other aspects of the question to deal with this evening, and I will ask him now to be kind enough to give us his lecture.

Sir Maurice de Bunsen, Ladies and Gentlemen, – During the latter years of the fourteenth century, AD, there arose in Amdo, one of the north eastern districts of Tibet, a man who was destined to play a large part in the national life. Buddhism had been introduced into the country several centuries earlier, but this man felt that reform was needed. He aimed at increasing priestly effort and strengthening priestly discipline. Among other measures he advocated the celibacy of the clergy and their abstinence from strong drink. The name of this reformer was Tsong-ka-pa – i.e., “The Man from the Land of Onions.” When, however, his followers increased and multiplied, he received the name of Je Rim-po-che – i.e., “The Noble One of Great Price,” a more dignified appellation than that which put him among the onions. His

disciples became known as “Yellow Hats” from the colour of their headgear, in contradistinction to the “Red Hats” of the unreformed priests. They were also called Ge-luk-pa, as opposed to the Nying-ma-pa, or “The Old Sect.” The word Ge-luk appears originally to have been taken from Gan-den-luk, “The Gan-den Sect,” but is nowadays generally interpreted as “The Sect of Religious Merit.”

Je Rim-po-che founded the great monastery, Gan-den, “The Joyous,” which contains nominally 3,300 monks, but at the present day about 4,000, for the large monasteries in Tibet are mostly over strength. In Gan-den he lived and died; there, too, is his mausoleum in one of the large monastic buildings under the canopy of a Mongol tent. He founded also the large monastery, Sera, which now contains 6,000 monks, and, with the solitary exception of Dre-pung, is the largest in the country.

On his death Je Rim-po-che’s power appears to have been assumed by Gan-den Trup-pa, a monk of the Gan-den monastery. The latter, after his death – by the system of reincarnation already familiar to Tibet – was believed to have passed his spirit into the body of a newly-born boy, who thus became the second of the series. In due course he died, and his reincarnation succeeded him under the name of So-nam Gya-tso. This one, the third, spread the religion in Mongolia, and received from one of his converts, a Mongol chief, the title Dalai Lama, or, more, correctly, Ta-le Lama, to which was added Vajradhara (in Tibetan, Dorjechang), the whole meaning “The All-Embracing Lama, Holder of the Sacred Thunderbolt.” It was thus that the title Dalai Lama originated.

The fifth in the series obtained, with the aid of one of his Mongol adherents, the sovereignty over the whole of Tibet. He is always regarded as the greatest of all. Others are referred to simply by their numbers – the eighth –, the eleventh, and so on; he is styled Nga-pa Chem-po, “The Great Fifth.” The present Dalai Lama is the thirteenth.

All are recognized as embodiments of Chen-re-zi, the Divine Buddha of Mercy, who is also by tradition the founder of the Tibetan race. The Tibetans anticipated Darwin by claiming descent from a monkey. The latter, an incarnation of Chen-re-zi, met a she-devil, and, after much hesitation, married her. They had six children, and thus the Tibetan race began. The Tibetans say that they inherit their good qualities from their first father and their failings from the she-devil.

During my nineteen years of service on the Tibetan borderland and in Tibet itself it was my good-fortune to be brought into close contact with the Dalai Lama on many occasions. In 1910 His Holiness, with the leading members of his Government, fled to India from the Chinese invasion of Lhasa. They remained in Darjeeling and in Kalimpong – the main entrepôt of Indo-Tibetan trade and close to the Tibetan frontier – for over two years. I was in charge of them during this period, and had with the Dalai Lama frequent private interviews, at which he invariably dismissed all others from the room so that we two, sitting together alone, could converse without restraint.

After the Dalai Lama returned to Tibet in 1912 he frequently invited me to visit him at Lhasa. The Indian Government did not see their way to permit me to accept any of these invitations until October, 1920, when I was placed in charge of a diplomatic Mission to Lhasa. I remained in the Holy City for close on a year, and during this time also had frequent *tête-à-tête* interviews with the Dalai Lama in his country palace, two miles outside Lhasa. When I left the Tibetan capital I felt that there were few Orientals whom I knew as well as the mysterious personage who governs Tibet.

I should like to take this opportunity of putting on record my great obligations to the Tibetan Government and people for the unfailing hospitality and kindness to myself and my colleagues throughout our visit. This is; no formal expression of thanks, for the atmosphere of friendliness was far above the ordinary. Even when the country was on the verge of civil war I rode about unarmed and practically alone, receiving nothing but courtesy from both the contending parties. And, when the trouble broke out again a few months later, the priests, – who are of all the most intolerant of foreigners – desired me to intervene in the dispute.

I was fortunate also in my colleagues. Lieut.-Col. Kennedy, I. M. S., was the only other white man in the party, and we met no other during our year together in Lhasa. He was proficient in the Tibetan language, in sympathy with the people, and surprised them in no small measure by his medical skill. To the others, too, my debt was very great, and perhaps most of all to Ku-sho Pa-lha-se, a Tibetan nobleman, who had been working with me for some seventeen years.

The road from India to Lhasa leads through Sikkim and the Chumbi Valley to the uplands of Tibet, and affords a striking example of the climatic changes that may be encountered in seventy miles of travel on this frontier. Sikkim, with its dripping forests and dense undergrowth, has on parts of the road a rainfall of 200 inches per annum. Crossing the Sikkim-Tibetan frontier, you descend through pinewoods to the Chumbi Valley, where the rainfall averages only 55 to 60 inches yearly. Starting up this valley at an elevation of 9,400 feet, you keep by the river to its source on the Phari plain, pass Phari – a busy little mart where the trade converges from India, Tibet, and Bhutan – and cross the main axis of the Himalaya, eleven miles farther on, by the Tang La, a pass 15,200 feet above sea-level. You are now on “The Plain of the Three Sisters,” and the change in climate is complete. Here the yearly rainfall is only 7 or 8 inches on the average. For seventy miles there is no tree or shrub; not even a plant more than a few inches in height. It may, no doubt, be regarded as a desolate land, but it has an abiding fascination for those who come to know it. Among its varied charms it is – as, I think, Sir Francis Younghusband has remarked in one of his books – a land of beautiful sunsets.

Beggar minstrels are frequently passed on the road. They play, sing, and dance as one passes. They call for “Sö-re sö-re,” with the distinctive whine of the Tibetan beggar folk; and in some cases an increasing contact with the outside world has introduced that penetrating little word, “baksheesh.”

The Gyantse fort and town stand midway between the Sikkim – Tibet frontier and Lhasa, 150 miles from each. The fort is a massive building, typical of Tibetan architecture; and in the days of bows and arrows and flint-lock muskets – days that are only now passing from Tibet – was well able to withstand such attacks as might be made against it. For many centuries Tibet was divided into a number of petty principalities, each chief or chieftainess holding the fort and governing the neighbourhood. It was then that the Tibetan saying came into common use: –

“The fort on the hill;
The fields on the plain.”

It was the duty of the fort to defend the villages within its jurisdiction: it was equally the duty of the villagers to feed the fort.

We left Yatung in the Chumbi Valley for Lhasa on November 1, 1920, and Gyantse a few days later. From Gyantse onwards our party was in country but seldom visited by Europeans. I will, however, describe only a few incidents on this road, for the road itself has often been described before. Two officials (dzong-pön) hold joint charge, over the Gyantse district, and one of these, Ne-tö Dzung-pön, being attached to my Mission, accompanied us to Lhasa and made all the travelling arrangements for us. We had now left behind the staging bungalows of the Indian Government and lodged in those belonging to the Government of Tibet or in the private houses of the people.

Forty miles from Gyantse we passed under the snow mountain known as Nö-jin Kang-sang, which is reputed to be the residence of a masterful demon, who would appear to take his cue from the Plagues of Egypt. He not only has the power of afflicting the population with boils, but joins with six other like-minded devils to send the hailstorms that too often devastate the ripening fields of barley and peas. It seems to be in harmony with his character that the name of the mountain should have a troublesome spelling. Nö-jin is spelt *knotspyin*, while *kangs-psang* is responsible for *kang-sang*,

At this point we crossed the Ka-rö La, a pass between 16,000 and 17,000 feet above sea-level. A gentle but continuous descent was made to the Yamdro Tso, "The Lake of the Upland Pastures," sometimes also known as the Yu Tso, "Turquoise Lake" Continuing along it for some twenty-seven miles, we then crossed the pass, known as the Kam-ba La, which divides the province of Tsang, that of which Shigatse is the capital, from the province in which Lhasa itself lies. The latter province is known as Ü, "The Centre," spelt *Tpus*. A steep descent followed, first down the bare slope, clad with snow in patches, and then by shrubs of juniper, barberry and rose interspersed with plentiful clumps of edelweiss. Still lower down were willow-trees and cultivated fields. We had now reached the great river, usually mapped and referred to as the Tsang-po, which flows through Southern Tibet from west to east, and is known on maps of India as the Brahmaputra. The word Tsang-po, however, merely denotes a large river. The one we were to cross is known by different names on different portions of its course; here it is called the Tsang-chu, "The River of Tsang." During winter the water is low, so we went over it in a large, square wooden boat; in the summer floods you must cross in one of the coracles made of yak-hide.

On the other side, at Chu-shur, we were met by one of the Dalai Lama's Secretaries, who brought a message of welcome from His Holiness, and informed me that he, as well as Ne-tö Dzung-pön, would be attached to my Mission during its stay in Lhasa. I arranged to halt for one day at Chu-shur in order to arrive at Lhasa on November 17, an auspicious date in the Tibetan calendar. In order to meet the wishes of the people it is of the utmost importance in Tibet to observe dates in this way, and, as far as possible, to take up an important work on a day of good omen.

The Holy City is screened from view until one is within a mile of it by two low hills which stand by side on the Lhasa plain. On one is the Temple of Medicine; on the other the Dalai Lama's palace, the world-famed Potala. It is not until one has passed under the long archway of the western entrance that the city of Lhasa is visible, barely a mile away.

We were now directly under the Potala, a huge and wonderful palace, nine storeys in front, and built into the rock at the back. It is filled partly by ecclesiastical officials and the Dalai Lama's private College of priests, partly by numerous chapels and

mausolea, and partly by the Dalai Lama's private apartments. It was built originally some eleven hundred years ago as a fort, and on a much smaller scale, by one of the early kings of Tibet. It was rebuilt, almost in its present form, by the Regent of Tibet, De-si Sang-gye Gya-tso, during the time of the fifth Dalai Lama. The walls are of stone, whitewashed except the portion enclosing the chapels, which are coloured red, and another small part, which is yellow. The massive grandeur of the great palace catches the eye and grips the imagination at all times, but perhaps most of all when the sunset lights up its gilded roofs.

At its base lies Potala Shö, a village of about a thousand inhabitants, ecclesiastical officials and others in the service of the Grand Lama. Farther on is the city of Lhasa. It lies well out in the plain, surrounded by groves of willow and poplar trees. The houses are large and solid, two or three storeys high, very often of stone below and of sun-dried bricks above. There are no brick-kilns. The people are fond of an outdoor life, and thus the groves, or parks (*ling-ka*), are in constant request, especially for the summer picnics, when the days are spent in singing, dancing, and gambling.

The members of the Mission were lodged in houses in the large grounds of the Kün-de-ling monastery, between the city and the Dalai Lama's country palace. To Lieut.-Col. Kennedy and myself was assigned the residence of a former Regent of Tibet, the Head Lama of this monastery. With the kindly consideration that is characteristic of him, the Dalai Lama had chosen this house for us, both because it was clean and because it was near his own residence, so that I could visit him frequently.

Shortly after our arrival in Lhasa my Personal Assistant, Rai Bahadur A-chuk Tse-ring, died of influenza contracted on the journey to Lhasa. He belonged to the Sikkimese branch of the Tibetan race, and was a man of exceptional political insight. In him I lost not only a trusted counsellor but an old friend, for we had worked together for some seventeen years. Three out of our small party of thirty died of this scourge, which is greatly dreaded in Tibet. It frequently turns to pneumonia, and the difficulty of breathing in these high altitudes necessarily lessens the patient's chance of recovery.

But let us return to the Dalai Lama. He was born in the province of Tak-po, a hundred miles east of Lhasa, of poor parents. His name is Nga-wang Lob-sang Tup-den Gya-tso. This name is, however, seldom used. His Holiness is ordinarily referred to as The Precious Protector, The Precious Sovereign, The Inmost Protector, The All-knowing Presence, or simply as The Presence.

Let me tell you something of the manner in which Tibetans discover the boy into whose body the spirit of the previous Dalai Lama is believed to have passed. The best way to do so will perhaps be to recount the story of the finding of the present Dalai Lama as it was told to me by the late Prime Minister of Tibet, a man of exceptional ability and shrewdness. I mention this latter point because, no doubt, the story may appear fantastic. The chief oracle of the Tibetan Government, Ne-chung, gave the names of the father and mother; the oracle at Sam-ye added the news that the hill behind their house was shaped like an elephant. The committee of priests, which deals with such matters, then deputed a lama and some doctors of divinity to a certain lake, and told the former that he would see reflected in the lake a picture of the young Dalai Lama, a boy about three years of age. On reaching the lake the lama found it covered with snow, but soon afterwards a strong wind arose and blew the snow off the ice which covered the lake. The lake itself stood on end, and in it the lama saw the picture that had been promised. A vision that appeared to him the following night showed the

young Dalai in his mother's arms. With such wealth of detail before him he soon found the young boy, with everything as shown by the oracles, the lake, and the vision. As a further confirmation the child indicated articles belonging to his predecessor, or, as we should more correctly say, to himself in his previous life. Among these was an image of Buddha, which he had given to the Chief of Li-tang, a district more than a month's journey distant. This Chief, from fear of losing the image, had hidden it in a beam in his house, and the little child was understood to disclose this fact. And the final confirmation that the boy was the true embodiment was made clear when they found on his person several of the distinguishing signs of Buddhahood.

The present Dalai Lama is somewhat below the average height of Tibetans, and the difference is accentuated by a slight stoop due to long hours spent in religious devotion. His eyebrows are arched and his moustache is larger than the average among those of his race. His face is slightly pitted with the marks of an old attack of smallpox. But when he speaks his face lights up with a peculiarly winning smile. He has a strong sense of humour, which shows itself not only in his conversation, but sometimes also in his administrative acts, and this is appreciated by his subjects, for the Tibetans are a laughter-loving people.

Of his four predecessors, none lived long enough to attain the temporal power. Against himself also an attempt was made, by witchcraft, when he was a young man, but he succeeded in defeating it. He is now about forty-nine years of age.

His Holiness spends as little time as possible in his great palace, the Potala. The dust and dirt of the city injure his health. He likes to take a fair amount of exercise, and he cannot take this except on the roof. So he has built himself his country palace, two miles from the town of Lhasa, in the ample grounds of Nor-bu Ling-ka, "The Jewel Park."

A good many are admitted to the outer grounds of the Jewel Park. But from the inner enclosure all except a few, very few, are excluded. Even Cabinet Ministers are barred. I was, so far as I know, the first white man to enter this. When the Dalai Lama showed me round, I was able to appreciate his fondness for animals, birds, and flowers. Huge Tibetan mastiffs of unappeasable ferocity are chained here and there, including one remarkably fine specimen from his own province, Tak-po. Deer and wild sheep, monkeys and porcupines, pheasants and snow-cock, are housed within the inner enclosure. Of the numerous flowers hydrangeas and sweet peas are his especial favourites. A large artificial sheet of water adorns these inner precincts, and the Grand Lama not infrequently spends his time in a beautiful little pavilion built upon it.

His is a busy life. His days are long and arduous. He rises before six, in the cold grey dawn of a Tibetan morning; and, with but scanty intermissions for food and leisure, prays and works till after midnight. Sometimes, when a ceremony is unusually early, a journey has to be started, or arrears of work to be overtaken, he will rise at 3 a.m. His subjects gratefully recognize the promptitude with which he despatches the State business.

One among his multifarious duties is that of blessing each year the monks of the Dre-pung, Se-ra, and Gan-den monasteries, who total about 20,000. Each is blessed separately. Another is the delivery of a public sermon in the early morning of the fifteenth day of the first Tibetan month. His religious devotions, public and private services, take at least three or four hours a day, usually more. In addition, all important matters of Church and State – and many others which would seem to us of trivial concern – are laid before him for decision.

When one realizes the difficulties in governing such a wide and sparsely-populated dominion, over half a million miles in area, one must admit the general orderliness which the Tibetan Government are able to maintain throughout most of the country. It is far more orderly than the government of those parts of Tibetan territory which are occupied and administered by China; it is far more orderly than Chinese administration in China itself.

Much more might be said about the Grand Lama's, many-sided activities. But time presses; I must close my remarks. He is more than a pope: he is god as well as king. The great majority of the people are well content that he should rule, for, as the couplet runs: –

“The Ruler in this Life;
The Uplifter in the Hereafter”

– they have only one Authority to deal with; this simplifies life's problems.

On the whole, if one considers the peculiar difficulties of his position, there are many less able rulers in the world than His Holiness the Dalai Lama of Tibet.

The CHAIRMAN: I am now going to ask Sir Francis Younghusband, who is present, to speak to us. I need not tell you about him; his name is written on the pages of our history, and his journey to Tibet is famous, and one of the most interesting Missions, I suppose, ever undertaken is the one that led him to that mysterious capital; besides which, of course, as we all know, his travels in various parts of Central Asia have made known to us great regions of which before we knew very little, and are of thrilling interest to all who read them, as we all do. I will ask Sir Francis kindly to address us. (Applause.)

Sir FRANCIS YOUNGHUSBAND: Mr. Chairman, Ladies and Gentlemen, – I am very glad to take this opportunity of testifying to the splendid work that Sir Charles Bell has done in Tibet. (Applause.) As I dare say you have already gathered, Sir Charles Bell is not one of those who go out of their way to obtrude themselves on the public eye. It is therefore all the more necessary that societies like ours should accord him a real welcome, and should give testimony to our appreciation of the work which he has done. As he has already said, he was on the borders of Tibet and in Tibet for the last nineteen years. The reason he has been so successful is this, that in his quiet way, by learning the Tibetan language, understanding their literature, and getting as it were inside their skins, he has been able to get into the closest possible touch with all classes of the Tibetan people, and, more, especially, with that most interesting and mysterious figure the Dalai Lama. I cannot say anything from personal experience of the Dalai Lama, because he was ungracious enough to depart when I went to Lhasa. He wrote me a letter when I was three marches off Lhasa, asking me not to come there, because if I went there I would spoil his religion and he would die. I wrote back to say that he had put me into a very awkward predicament, because, I understood from him that if I went to Lhasa he would die, but, I said, on the other hand if I did not go to Lhasa I should die myself. And so he retired from Lhasa for what he described as three year's spiritual contemplation. Eventually, however, as Sir Charles Bell has related, he did come down to India, and, largely through the tact and experience of Sir Charles Bell, he was able to gather a favourable

impression of our attitude towards him, with the result that our relations with Tibet have been on a friendly footing ever since. (Applause.) To me it is extremely interesting to look back from this distance, and over nineteen years' period of time, to what has been happening since I first went to Tibet. When I first went there three Lamas were sent down to the Tibetan camp opposite mine to curse me for a week. (Laughter.) I rode over unescorted and unannounced into the Tibetan camp, and I had the chance of seeing them in the actual practice of cursing me, and they seemed to be doing it in a very thorough way. So there were two great spiritual forces in opposition. On the one hand were the Tibetans cursing us. The Dalai Lama was supposed to have control over spiritual forces which could harm us, and those Lamas considered that they had control over them, too. They were shooting them out at us, and they really believed in their efficacy for destroying us. It was for a perfectly intelligible reason that they were cursing us. The reason was this, that they really did think that if we British got into Tibet we would, as they said, destroy their religion. It was very natural that they should resent this, and that with all the forces they had at their command should do their best to keep us out. But, on the other hand, opposed to that were the forces which we exercised. Part of those forces were extremely material. They were guns and rifles and bullets. But all the same there was behind these the spiritual force of goodwill, because after all we were not sent up there to destroy the Tibetans. We were sent to Tibet to put our relations on a good and friendly footing. We bore no malice against them. It was a matter of practical business to have the people inhabiting that great area of Tibet on a friendly footing with us instead of in a hostile temper. I was very fortunate to have as my assistant and secretary Captain O'Connor, a man who had studied the Tibetans, knew their language, and had himself a great liking for them. I had also Mr. Bell, as he then was, himself. He had the same kind of feeling towards the Tibetans. He naturally liked them, and they are a likeable people. The consequence was that we gradually got them round and obtained their goodwill. That is a practical point. And what Sir Charles Bell has said this evening gives evidence that during the last nineteen years this feeling of the Tibetans to us has been continually friendly. Not only Sir Charles Bell himself has been up there for a whole year in the most intimate relations with Dalai Lama himself, but other Englishmen have been there also. Sir Henry Hayden, who lost his life this year in the Alps, was the geologist in our Mission, and spent many months up there last year as geologist at the invitation of the Dalai Lama himself. And there have been telegraph officers there. A most interesting journey was also made through Tibet by General Pereira, who was received, I believe, by the Dalai Lama himself. That all goes to show that during the last nineteen years the efforts to get our relationship on a friendly footing have been successful, and any Englishman is now welcomed in Lhasa. I close these few remarks by offering to Sir Charles Bell the congratulations of the Society upon the fine work which he has accomplished and our high appreciation of his great services.

The CHAIRMAN: I believe that we have with us at this moment Dr. McGovern, who has lately published his most interesting account of his recent journey in Tibet. We should all be very glad to hear a few words from him if he would be kind enough to address us. (Applause.)

Dr. McGovern: First of all, I think I should like to echo very sincerely the words which have been uttered by Sir Francis Younghusband with reference to Sir Charles

Bell himself. Although I was forced to go to Tibet under not quite the pleasant conditions which met Sir Charles Bell, during the course of my stay in Lhasa, where I came in contact with various notable officials, it was always of interest and a pleasure to me to find the extreme enthusiasm with which they spoke both of the personal character of Sir Charles Bell and the services which he has rendered to the Tibetan nation. (Applause.) The Dalai Lama himself, and his Cabinet, have had in the last few years a very strenuous tussle inside their camp. There are many of the prominent monks who are not by any means fond of the British Government, nor do they approve the known friendship of the Dalai Lama and his immediate Court for the British Government and officials, and certainly the Dalai Lama's task of attempting to win the friendship of his own people for India has been very largely helped by the very sympathetic nature of the negotiations which Sir Charles Bell has always kept with the Tibetan Government. (Applause.) We have therefore to say that the present condition, and the probable future condition of the country, will depend very largely upon the result of the policy which Sir Charles Bell has himself initiated. Jumping now from Sir Charles and his immediate service to Tibet, undoubtedly the thing that impresses one are the remarks that he made about the Dalai Lama himself – certainly a most extraordinary character; and perhaps, not being in the Diplomatic Service, it will be possible for me to speak more openly than was done by Sir Charles himself. His Holiness has had a career which is unique for Dalai Lamas in the past, and which has all the elements of the romances which were the delight of our childhood. Out of thirteen Dalai Lamas who have so far been on the throne, only two have really been of any importance – namely, the fifth and the present man, the thirteenth. The present has indeed been twice exiled from his own country. Two attempts have been made to get rid of him while still a boy – by witchcraft first of all, then by poison. Later, the trouble with the British forced him to retire to Mongolia and China; and, lastly, he was forced to fly into India in order to escape from the Chinese; and now, by the efforts of that extraordinary man, Tsarong Shapé of Lhasa, he has come back into his own. These vicissitudes in his career wholly modified his character and person. It is said – I do not know upon what evidence – that as a young man he was full of violent passions, difficult to curb, and lacking in self-control, but as the result of his long vicissitudes of fortune he has united a caution and canniness that reminds one of the Scotch rather than the Tibetans. I think the next few years are going to see an interesting development in Tibetan politics because of the caution with which he has learned to face every issue. I think one point left out by previous speakers is the new position of Tibet since 1912, when the Dalai Lama went back in glory and triumph to Lhasa. Prior to that time the Chinese had been very much in power, and the Dalai Lama had been, to a certain extent, but only to a certain extent, a puppet in the hands of the Chinese. The situation is now changed, and he is practically an independent monarch who refuses to recognize any overlordship on the part of China. This is a situation fraught with much difficulty, not only to Tibet and China but to our own country, because we have to make up our minds in the next few years. Whether we are going to support the Dalai Lama and his claims to be an independent Sovereign, or whether we are to side with China as to Tibet being a part of her own empire. This is not the time to discuss that matter, but it is an interesting fact that this is a problem for Tibet in the near future. (Applause.)

The CHAIRMAN then called on Sir John Jordan.

Sir John JORDAN: Mr. Chairman, Ladies and Gentlemen, – I had hoped to escape the Chairman's vigilant eye and to avoid this ordeal. I really know hardly anything at all of the subject of the lecture to-night, and I can only express the very great interest with which I have listened to all that Sir Charles Bell has told us, especially his excellent pictures of Tibet. Naturally, coming from China, I look upon Tibet from a different angle, and if I say anything, I hope it will not be considered that I do not appreciate all that the lecturer has told us, but in China we do not see Tibet from the Indian point of view. It so happens, to begin with, that I have a personal grievance against Sir Charles Bell, Dr. McGovern, and all these explorers. When I went to China first there was some mystery about the Far East, and it was really a pleasant place to live in. In Peking there was the mystery of the Imperial Palace. We knew nothing of what was going on. Chinese officials came there in flowing robes and stood before the Empress Dowager. Now, when you go to Peking, you are ushered into the presence of the representative of a republic, practically nobody at all, who receives you perhaps not even in uniform, but in a frock-coat and ordinary morning dress. The Far East is changed and all its glamour has departed. The same with Korea, where I spent a few years. In my early days Korea was the Hermit Kingdom and every-one wanted to go to Korea, but now nobody wants to go there at all. Now they have opened up Tibet, the last remaining mystery, and future generations will have no mystery to explore. As regards the Dalai Lama, I have met him and cannot altogether share the great admiration expressed for him. But my knowledge of him is of a very slender character indeed. He came to Peking – I think it was in 1908 – during one of those exiles, and I do not think he spent the time in that contemplation of which Dr. McGovern has spoken. (Laughter.) My American colleague was at that time Mr. Rockhill, a very great Tibetan explorer and scholar. He was very anxious to see the Dalai Lama and had made many efforts to enter Lhasa, but always unsuccessfully. The Dalai Lama came right across Asia with an immense retinue of people, who preyed upon the country like locusts – so the Chinese told us. He settled down for a time at Wu T'ai Shan, and Mr. Rockhill was afraid he would not come to Peking at all. He paid His Holiness a visit there, and gave us the same impression as Sir Charles has given us, of a very ethereal person. But when the Dalai Lama came to Peking he did not strike us as being so ethereal as he has apparently since become. At that time he was very anxious to get back his temporal power. He wanted to recover the position held by the fifth Dalai Lama, of which the Chinese had deprived him; he spent probably three or four months in Peking and it was a time of very heated intrigue indeed. We all had private channels of communication. I had a very active Russian colleague, and I myself displayed a certain amount of activity. We all had these secret interviews as to the policy of Tibet and its relations with China. The whole Tibetan question was in the melting-pot.

It so happened at the time that the Heir-Apparent of Sikkim was staying with – and he, too, was a reincarnation of someone. He was a very nice little man, who had been educated at Oxford, and he used to go and see the Dalai Lama every morning. As an earnest Buddhist, he was deeply disappointed with the low state into which Buddhism had fallen in China. I always asked him what was going on; I wanted to get political information, but I got nothing but the latest sutra and prayer, and ecclesiastical news generally. Things became so bad that the Chinese did not know what to do to put an end to the intrigues. There was a man there, Chang Yin-t'ang, who had

gone to India to conduct negotiations connected with Tibet, and the Chinese Foreign Office put him on the job. He was a very astute little person, and he thought out a plan. He said the Dalai Lama was too much engaged in spiritual duties to attend to all these mundane affairs, and that really the time must be limited. He sent out a circular, and said that in future the Dalai Lama, instead of having these private audiences, would receive from four to five every day, Sundays excepted, and that any person who wanted to see him – Members of the Legations or any of the foreign community of Peking – had only to send an application to the Chinese Foreign Office and they would be introduced by Mr. Chang. The receptions lost their attraction. The whole thing was reduced to the level of a ladies' tea-party, and after a short time nobody wanted to see the Dalai Lama any more. So there was no more trouble. That is really all I know about the Dalai Lama; but as this is a private meeting I might tell one little incident that occurred. It so happens that when you go to see His Holiness you have to take a *ka-ta*, a sort of silk scarf. Instead of taking a card you take a *ka-ta*, and we had some difficulty in Peking in finding these *ka-tas*. They were rather expensive. I got one which cost me something, but some members of my Staff naturally objected to paying two or three pounds for a visiting-card; but one, a resourceful man among them, was a commercial Councillor, and he said: "I will supply you all with *ka-tas*. I have got remnants sent out from Manchester, and I will have them cut up into *ka-tas* for you." So they all got *ka-tas*, and I was rather disappointed – for their *ka-tas* all looked quite as good as mine. I mention this to show that the Dalai Lama, or his people, had a certain amount of worldly shrewdness. The custom is that you get back a *ka-ta* when you present one. I presented mine, and another handsome one was given me in return. The next man presented his *ka-ta*. They inspected it and gave it back to him. Then a procession came up, one after the other, and each *ka-ta* was given back.

One of my colleagues, did better than that. He went there not knowing about this custom at all, and they said: "You cannot see the Dalai Lama without a *ka-ta*." He said: "I have brought none," They said: "We will lend you one." And they lent him one, and he went up and presented this *ka-ta* to the Dalai Lama, who gave it back. He walked away with it, but they followed after him for some distance and said: "Look here, you brought nothing here and you are going to take nothing away." At that time the Dalai was not viewed with much favour by his co-religionists in North China. I think, looking rather far ahead, that China will have something to say about Tibet yet. I do not wish to dwell upon the relations between Great Britain and Tibet. I am sure they are all right and going on very well, but, of course, the Tibetans know they are a shuttlecock between two battledores, and, as always happens in such cases, the friendship is, to a certain extent, a lively sense of present needs and of favours to come. Although China is disorganized now, they have not altogether forgotten Tibet. If there is anything the Chinese will never give up, it is any remnant of suzerainty over any other country. So that although China has been turned out of Tibet for the present, and there is not a Chinese in it, the day may come when there will be some trouble over it. I do not think you can take it for granted that China will not try to get back.

The LECTURER: Sir Maurice de Bunson, Ladies and Gentlemen, – I am more grateful than I can say for the extremely kind remarks that have been made about me, and for your generous expression of thanks.

I have not much to say as regards the remarks of the other speakers, which to me were exceptionally interesting. As Sir John Jordan has quite rightly said, nothing in Tibet can be done without the little piece of silk cloth known as a *ka-ta*. If you go to see a person, you give a *ka-ta* and get one back, the same or another – it all depends upon intricate rules whether you get your own or another. If you write a letter you cannot merely put it into an envelope and send it; you must put it into a *ka-ta*. As regards their price, in Tibet this varies from eight shillings to a half-penny; and according to your rank you spend eight shillings or a half-penny, or something in between. There are eight recognized qualities of *ka-ta*.

As regards Sir John Jordan's and Sir Francis Younghusband's experiences with the Dalai Lama, there is no doubt, as Dr McGovern has said, that his character has been considerably modified by the force of adverse circumstances. If anybody has been schooled in adversity, the Dalai Lama has certainly been that man. He has always been a man of quick temper. He has likewise always been a man of strong will, and in many ways a very strong character. No doubt he has said and written things which seem peculiar to us, but Tibetans do not look at these things in the same way as Western people. When, for instance, the Dalai Lama fled to India from the Chinese invasion there were many who said: "What a coward he is to run away and leave his people to their fate!" That was, one may say, a very common Western view, but the Tibetans did not look upon it in that way at all. They knew that, if the Dalai Lama remained in Tibet and was captured by the Chinese, not only would he be stripped of his temporal power, but possibly be made to issue orders and edicts in his own name that were really inspired by the Chinese. They knew that if he was captured it would be the end of the national hopes of Tibet. Tibet is very much opposed to Chinese domination; so the Tibetans hold that the Dalai Lama was perfectly right to flee. I only mention this as an example to show how the Tibetan point of view may differ from that held by European peoples.

The political questions at issue between Tibet and other countries are very complex, and – although, of course, I have had a great deal to do with them – I do not think it would serve any useful purpose if I entered into them now, nor indeed would there be time to do so.

TOM BROWNS FROM CENTRAL ASIA

Alastair Lamb

Source: A. Lamb, *The McMahon Line: A Study in the Relations between India, China and Tibet, 1904–1914*, 2 vols., London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1966, vol. 2, pp. 599–603.

The arrival at Rugby in 1913 of four Tibetan youths is one of the more unexpected by-products of the Chinese Revolution and its consequences on the Tibetan plateau. The whole episode, moreover, provides an admirable example of the political complexities which could face the British in their dealings with their Tibetan neighbours; and, as such, it deserves relating.

The idea of providing a Western education for a number of carefully selected youths was not particularly novel. The Indian Government had been thinking, since at least the days of the Younghusband Mission, about starting training projects in India for young Tibetans. The matter had been discussed with the Panchen Lama in 1905–6, and there can be no doubt that Bell explored its possibilities in great detail with the Dalai Lama during the latter's residence in Darjeeling in 1910–12. There was evidence that Tibetans were already going off for training in both Russia and Japan; and it seemed reasonable enough that in these circumstances a class of British-trained Tibetans should be created. Thus when, after returning to Tibet, the Dalai Lama in August 1912 proposed that 'some energetic and clever sons of respectable families' in Tibet be sent to England, the Indian Government was prepared to co-operate. In early 1913 the youths selected turned up at the British Trade Agency at Gyantse, where their companion, a Tibetan official called Lungshar, presented Gould with a request from the Dalai Lama for 'four first-class educations at Oxford College, London'.¹

At this time Basil Gould was about to go to England on leave. The Indian Government, therefore, decided that he should guide the four Tibetans through the difficult first few weeks of their journey away from the 'roof of the world'. The boys were also to be accompanied on their trip by Lungshar and his wife and by the Sikkimese policeman Laden La, whose son, Sonam Topge, was also going to the United Kingdom for his schooling. The four boys were Mondo, who was a monk and aged 17, Kyipup, aged 16, Gongkar, also 16, and Rinchengang, 11 years old. Their party included two Tibetan servants. Gould and his charges reached England in April 1913. The Tibetan boys settled down at 'The Warren', Heath End, Farnham, where they began to learn English under the supervision of the Berlitz School of Languages while their future movements were being considered.²

From the outset the British found Lungshar something of a nuisance. In theory no more than the official escort for the boys, in fact Lungshar regarded himself (and may well have been so regarded by the Dalai Lama) as a Tibetan ambassador at large. Before leaving India he had been detected in intrigues with Japanese agents in Calcutta, who hoped, it seemed, that the boys could be diverted to Japan for their education – a further piece of evidence that Japan was developing very wide Central Asian interests.³ No sooner in England than Lungshar began to talk about going to Germany, to the United States and to other countries, including, by implication, Russia. He also demanded formal interviews with King George V and with members of the British Cabinet. Lungshar tried to set up his own house, a kind of Tibetan Embassy, in London, away from Laden La, whose task it was to keep the Tibetan official under close supervision.⁴ Lungshar's popularity with the India Office, who were responsible for the Tibetans' welfare in England, was not increased when his wife undertook, with considerable success, the seduction of one of the Tibetan boys. Lungshar could not be confined to Farnham for ever. He was able to visit London on occasions, when his movements were closely watched by the Special Branch of Scotland Yard, who found him meeting one Mukandi Lal, an Indian undergraduate at Hertford College, Oxford, with 'advanced views'.⁵ Lungshar also established relations with the Chinese Legation in London, but the India Office were unable to find out why. Within three months of Lungshar's arrival in England the India Office were trying to get the Indian Government to persuade the Dalai Lama to recall this troublesome Tibetan. The Dalai Lama, who seems to have attached some importance to Lungshar's mission, and who, many years later, was to make Lungshar one of his most trusted and influential advisers, refused.⁶ Lungshar, therefore, was able to remain in Europe until mid-1914.

The British would have liked to deny that Lungshar possessed any diplomatic status at all. They did not trust him, and they were worried lest his presence should lead to Russian protests under the 1907 Convention. However, it was appreciated that the Russians, in early 1913, had rather weakened their case in this particular respect, when they allowed Dorjiev to bring from Tibet fifteen boys to be educated in Russian schools. Dorjiev had also brought with him letters and presents from the Dalai Lama to the Tsar, which the latter had accepted.⁷ Hence there were precedents, as well as good political reasons, for Lungshar's communication of gifts and messages from the Lama to King George.⁸ On 28 June 1913, therefore, Lungshar was received by the King at Buckingham Palace.⁹ The Dalai Lama's gifts were handed over. They were valued at £1,000. In return, King George presented to the Lama gifts worth £1,127 19s. 4d., including photographs of the King and Queen, paintings of Buckingham Palace and the Houses of Parliament, a set of the coins of the United Kingdom, a telescope (rather a cheap one, costing £22 5s., which Dollonds thought was quite good enough for a Tibetan Lama), a set of the *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, a silk scarf from Liberty's, a carriage and harness, a pair of sporting guns, some Irish table linen, and a pair of gold lions on marble pedestals. What the Dalai Lama thought of this assemblage is not recorded.

When Lungshar and the four boys reached England no decision had yet been made as to the place of their schooling. Gould records that, after a discussion between Sir A. Hirtzel, J. E. Shuckburgh and Gould, Harrow, Eton and Wellington were rejected and Rugby decided upon as just the place to educate Tibetans.¹⁰ This story is

not entirely borne out by the archives, which suggest that the first school considered was Cheltenham.¹¹ This was rejected only when it was discovered that three sons of President Yuan Shih-k'ai and a son of the Chinese Minister in London were also down for this establishment. The India Office asked the Foreign Office whether the headmaster of Cheltenham might be persuaded to refuse the Chinese boys; but the Foreign Office opinion that Yuan's sons were certainly a more prestigious addition to the school enrolment than four Tibetans ended this official attempt to meddle in public school politics. Rugby was then decided upon. Thus there was never a chance that the OE, or OH tie would have turned out to be a passport to Tibet.¹²

Rinchengang, the youngest of the four boys, after Rugby went on to the Universities of London and Birmingham, where he studied electrical engineering. Gongkar went on to a short period of officer training with the Indian Army; but his death of pneumonia in 1917 deprived the Tibetan armed forces of the benefit of his experience.¹³ The other boys all returned to Tibet, where they were effectively sidetracked by the Tibetan establishment.¹⁴ By the 1940s, when Heinrich Harrer made his way to Lhasa, only one of them was still alive.¹⁵

The episode of the Tibetan boys had clear political implications. Lord Hardinge justified the venture on the grounds that 'in our opinion the success of the experiment is most important; the education of Tibetan youths will otherwise be entrusted to the Russians or Japanese'.¹⁶ Both the Chinese and Japanese made attempts to 'get at' Lungshar and his charges while they were in Calcutta. Lungshar's audience with King George V, and his presentation of gifts from the Dalai Lama to Lord Crewe, Sir Edward Grey, and the Lord High Commissioner for Education as well, was a direct parallel to the activities of Dorjiev in St. Petersburg. The British discovered, however, that the establishment of such relations with the Tibetans was not an unmixed blessing. In the first place, there remained the risk of Russian protest. As was clear from at least 1907, the British could not really use Dorjiev as an excuse for their own contacts with the Dalai Lama. Somehow, Dorjiev was always engaged upon purely 'religious' business such as was authorised by the 1907 Convention: no one could claim that Lungshar was solely concerned with religious matters. In the second place, once a Tibetan envoy like Lungshar reached England, it was very difficult to stop him attempting to open up relations with Powers other than the British. This sort of diplomacy, far from securing British influence in Tibet, seemed to involve the risk of widening Tibetan international relations to an undesirable degree. All this reinforced the British conclusions that the best status for Tibet was not full independence; rather, Tibet chained to a nominal Chinese suzerainty was a Tibet which would be forced to confine its quest for foreign assistance to British India.

The experiment of the education in England of the four Tibetan boys can hardly be described as a success. The boys made no significant contribution in later life to the development of Tibet; and they certainly made the Tibetans no more pro-British than would have been the case had they remained at home. The experiment was not repeated during the remaining period of British rule in the Indian subcontinent.

Notes

1 Gould, B. J. (Sir Basil), *The Jewel in the Lotus: Recollections of an Indian Political*, London 1957, p. 27.

- 2 FO 535/16, no. 223, Gould to Bell, 9 April 1913, and Gould to IO, 30 April 1913.
- 3 FO 535/16, no. 223, Gould to Bell, 9 April 1913.
- 4 PEF 1913/76, no. 1937/13, Gould to IO, 14 May 1913.
- 5 PEF 1913/76, Scotland Yard to IO, 31 January 1914.
- 6 FO 371/1612, no. 35182, IO to FO, 29 July 1913. For more about Lungshar's subsequent career, see Richardson, H. E., *Tibet and its History*, London 1962.
- 7 FO 371/1609, no. 7570, Buchanan to Grey, 13 February 1913.
- 8 FO 371/1611, no. 26551, Minute by Gregory, 10 June 1913.
- 9 FO 371/1613, no. 48043, Secretary of State to Viceroy, 17 October 1913.
- 10 Gould, *Jewel in the Lotus*, *op. cit.*, p. 29.
- 11 See correspondence in FO 371/1612, nos. 40328 and 40329.
- 12 David Macdonald has it that two of the boys went to Harrow; but he is in error. See D. Macdonald, *Twenty Years in Tibet*, London, 1932, p. 218.
- 13 Gongkar is said to have fallen in love with and tried to marry an English girl, but to have been refused permission for such a match by the Dalai Lama. Macdonald, *Twenty Years*, *op. cit.*, p. 219.
- 14 Gould, *Jewel in the Lotus*, *op. cit.*, pp. 29–30: see also Bell, *Portrait of a Dalai Lama*, London 1946 *op. cit.*, p. 203.
- 15 H. Harrer, *Seven Years in Tibet*, London, 1953.
- 16 FO 535/16, no. 135, Viceroy to Secretary of State, 6 March 1913.
- 17 FO 535/16, no. 223, Gould to IO, 30 April 1913.

TIBET AND THE LEAGUE OF
NATIONS WITH REFERENCE TO
LETTERS FOUND IN THE INDIA
OFFICE LIBRARY, UNDER SIR
CHARLES BELL'S COLLECTIONS*

Tsering W. Shakya

Source: *The Tibet Journal* X(3) (1985): pp. 48–56.

By the end of the First World War, in 1918, Tibet had achieved considerable success in international politics. The 1913–14 Simla Convention and the Anglo-Tibetan trade agreement of 1914 afforded Tibet a certain amount of international recognition. Although Tibet did not receive de-jure recognition during this period, she was recognised by Britain as a de facto independent state after 1914.

The 1914 Anglo-Tibetan trade agreement was signed between two countries without any interference from China, and the articles of the convention were observed by both parties. From 1904 onwards, Tibet's political status and her internal situation were interwoven as never before with her international relationships.

In 1904, Younghusband's "expedition" had thrust Tibet into the international political arena. The 1907 Anglo-Russian agreement regarding Tibet and Afghanistan gave Tibet a certain international importance. The humiliation of the Younghusband expedition could be seen as a blessing in disguise. Until the Younghusband expedition, Tibetan policy was to have no foreign policy, and to avoid any relations with British India. This policy was a product of a real desire for isolation from the outside world.

The Younghusband expedition, and subsequent Chinese attempts to re-establish some control in Tibet between 1910–1918, demonstrated the need for an international solution to the problem of Tibet's status. During the 13th Dalai Lama's years of exile, spent in Mongolia, China and later in India, the urgent need for a genuine political independence became apparent, as did the need for a positive forward foreign policy. This resulted in the creation of the Bureau of Foreign Affairs in Lhasa. The Younghusband expedition and the failure of the Chinese to match the British convinced the Tibetans that China was no match for the might of the British Empire. Thus the survival of Tibet could not be protected by the Chinese but lay in closer contact with, Russia, Britain and Japan.

The Russians would have been the natural choice and in the past they had expressed a certain interest in Tibet, but Russia did not have any effective means of assisting Tibet, and the British would have objected to any Russian involvement there. Nevertheless, the 13th Dalai Lama did seek Russian help, and tried to establish a definite relationship with the Russians through his confidant, the enigmatic Dorjiev. While in exile, the Dalai Lama did conduct a correspondence with the Tsar. The communications never flourished into any meaningful results.

The case for Britain was more hopeful. Since the days of Lord Curzon, Britain had desired for a buffer state between British India and other powers. The Tibetan desire for greater independence from China appeared to be an opportunity for the British to fulfill their desire for this buffer State between India and China, (and also to negate possible Russian influence) in the area thereby. The 1904 Anglo-Tibetan agreement was a watershed in the development of Anglo-Tibetan relations.

For the first time, the British recognised Tibet's right to establish a treaty with foreign powers. From that time onwards, Tibet never missed a chance to sign any treaties with Britain, which eventually culminated in the 1913–1914 Simla Convention and the establishment of the McMahon line. In a legal sense the Simla Convention was a farce, yet it was seen by the Tibetans as an achievement. To some extent, it was indeed a success for the Tibetans, for it gave them a sense of being recognised by the British. The Articles of the Convention were binding for the signatories, Britain and Tibet, and the agreement was observed between the two countries.

In 1913 Tibet signed a treaty for the first time which made particular reference to her political status. On 11th January 1913, in Mongolia a treaty was signed between Mongolia and Tibet. In the first article of the treaty, Tibet acknowledged Mongolia as an Independent State. The second article stated: "The Sovereign of the Mongolian people Jet-tsun Dampa Lama approves and acknowledges the formation of an independent state and the proclamation of the Dalai Lama Sovereign of Tibet."

Thus it is clear that between 1904–1913 Tibet was engaged in an active forward foreign policy. (During the period there were many internal changes). The chief aim of the forward policy was to seek international recognition and resist any Chinese attempt to re-establish their domination of Tibet and her external relations. As far as her chief objectives were concerned, Tibet failed. Tibet never received a de-jure recognition from Britain or the other major powers. This failure was due partly to the unwillingness and cautious attitude of other countries. Most important of all, it failed because of a lack of commitment on the Tibetan part, and because the Simla Convention gave Tibet a false sense of security and an illusory recognition. When the first World War started, Tibet once more withdrew into seclusion.

After the 1st World War, attention was focussed in the international political arena on the formation of the "League of Nations." Thus it would have been logical, in view of Tibet's earlier forward foreign policy for her to join, "The League of Nations." This would positively assert Tibet's independence/sovereignty. The conditions were favourable for Tibet, because one of the corner stones of the League of Nations was President Wilson's concept of "self-determination," through which many countries of Central Europe emerged. The New Republic of China also adopted the concept of self-determination for minorities. So it is a valid question to ask why Tibet did not join the League of Nation, when membership of the league was a means of achieving

national objectives. In most existing historical writings on Tibet, this question has never been asked, and no reference has been made to the League of Nations; this gives one the impression that Tibet knew nothing of the League's existence. We may ask, did Tibet know of the existence of the League of Nations? The answer is unequivocally "Yes." Sir Charles Bell has made mention of the League of Nations; [in his "Portrait of the Dalai Lama"/London, 1946 pp. 350-351]. He gives a very accurate view of Tibet's knowledge of the League of Nations. He also quotes from a letter which he helped to write for (Sonam Wangyal) Palhese. It appears that the Dalai Lama was very clearly aware of the existence of the League of Nations; Sir Charles Bell stated "Tibetans call the League of Nations "The Assembly in Europe."

Recently, when I was reading through Sir Charles Bell's Collection, (Eur. F80 5d 8 vi) in the India Office Library I came across nine letters written between the period 28th Sept 1927-9th January 1928. These nine letters refer to Tibetan attempts to acquire more information about the League of Nations and the possibility of admission to it.

After retiring from office, Bell came back to Britain and requested permission for his friend, Palhese to come to England with him on a vacation. This he did, with permission from the Dalai Lama, and he was issued with a Tibetan passport. It seems that this time the Dalai Lama may have instructed Palhese (Sonam Wangyal) to inquire about the League of Nations.

While in London (Sir Charles) Bell made arrangements so that Palhese could correspond with some leading authorities on the League of Nations. A friend of (Sir Charles) Bell, Mary Scott, introduced Palhese to Dr. Barbour who was an academic closely associated with the "League of Nations" Union, a powerful pressure group which championed the cause of the League of Nations, and had considerable influence. The president of the organisation was Lord Robert Cecil, who was the British Commonwealth representative at Geneva and the prime architect of the League of Nations, for which he received the Nobel Peace Prize in 1938. The Chairman of the Union was Professor Gilbert Murray.

Palhese's first letter to Dr. Barbour was dated 5th Dec. 1927 and it reveals the Tibetan perception of what they regarded to be the most important issues of the period. The letter also sheds light on Tibet's foreign policy and her attitudes toward the outside world. This first letter to which I refer is based on five questions. Four questions are concerned with possible Tibetan objections and Tibetan fears regarding the consequences of joining the League of Nations. We shall look closely at the Tibetan objections and fears.

In his letter Palhese writes, "My Government have not given me any instructions whatever about this, so please do not mention it to anybody. It is simply my own idea, and would not do for any others, especially Chinese or Russians, to hear about this at this stage." It is possible that Palhese may not have had any legal authority from the Tibetan Government. But it appears that he was in full consultation with the 13th Dalai Lama. Amongst the collection in the India office, there is a note written by Sir Charles Bell, which states "I (Sir Charles Bell) asked Khuso Palhese what objections may present themselves to the Dalai Lama's mind, for Palhese read to me an extract from a letter which he received from the Dalai Lama, in which the letter says that he will consider the matter carefully and decide later." It is clear from this statement that Palhese was in full consultation with the Dalai Lama and was acting legitimately.

Palhese's desire for the utmost secrecy could explain his statement to Dr. Barbour that "It is simply my own idea."

In Palhese's first letter to Dr. Barbour, he writes: "Would there be any objections to Tibet joining the League of Nations?, We are an independent nation. China has claimed surzerainty over us, but we have never admitted this. Thirteen years ago we fought with the Chinese and drove them all out, the Chinese Amban and his soldiers and since we have governed our own country without any interference from China or other nation." In 1911 Tibetans expelled the Chinese Amban and a small garrison of Chinese soldiers from Lhasa, and the 13th Dalai Lama returned to Tibet from his exile in India. This marked a new phase in Tibetan history. From Palhese's letter it is clear that Tibet regarded itself to be an independent nation. If Tibet did join the League of Nations the independent status of Tibet would have had to be explicitly recognised by all member states. Although Tibet did enjoy de-facto recognition and the status of a fully independent state during the period, the crucial question or obstacles would have been Russia, Britain and China. China would have objected to Tibetan admission. Britain's continuing interest in Tibet was to create a buffer state and to insulate British India. The need for a buffer state became increasingly important as the Russian Revolution spread in Central Asia. At the same time, Britain could not afford to antagonise China and any British support would have been regarded by the Russians as British interference.

In his reply to Palhese's question, Dr. Barbour writes, "I have little doubt that Thibet would be recognised as a fully self-governing state. So there should be no difficulty there." Dr. Barbour was confident that as things stood, Tibet would be admitted to the League of Nations and foresaw no difficulty. The question still remained of whether the British Government would support and acknowledge Tibet's independence. It was doubtful whether Tibet would gain two-thirds of the votes in an assembly, which included the Chinese.

Palhese rightly felt that Tibetans would need a great deal of re-assurance from the League of Nations and its member states. In his letter to Dr. Barbour, Palhese posed four questions. The first question was: "Would the League of Nations harm the Tibetan religion?" The second question, "Would the League of Nations try to make Tibet bring her internal customs into harmony with those of other nations?" The third question raises the matter of whether other member-states would want to send their representatives to Tibet. The fourth question was regarded as the "most important of all:" "If the Chinese should threaten to invade Tibet, would the League of Nations help Tibet?" and Palhese continued: "Unless we could be reassured on this point, our expense would be for nothing." This issue was of paramount importance to Tibet.

After having expelled the Chinese, Tibet's chief concern was how to keep them out permanently. Ever since the expulsion of the Chinese Amban in 1911, Tibet had sought to maintain her independence and to develop internal security by improving her army and gaining international recognition. Thus for Tibet the Simla-Conference and the agreement was a means of attaining international recognition, and so any other international involvement with the outside would have to serve the same purpose.

Dr. Barbour replied to Palhese's letter on 9th December. He suggested that Palhese should arrange to meet with higher authority, such as Lord Robert Cecil or Professor Gilbert Murray. Dr. Barbour gave very clever answers to the questions raised by Palhese. In his answer to the first two questions, he stated that the League of Nations'

membership was composed of different nations, many of whom had different religions and customs. Therefore the League would not interfere with the internal customs of its members. With regard to the question of Tibet having to permit foreign representatives and travellers, Dr. Barbour stated that it was difficult to answer this question, as there was nothing in the League of Nations' covenant to say that members should accept representatives from other nations. This question was a peculiarly Tibetan one, because Tibet had for many years tried to resist foreign penetrations.

Finally we come to the "most important" question; "If the Chinese should threaten to invade Tibet, would the League of Nations help Tibet?" If Tibet had been elected into the League of Nations then she would have been recognised as an independent state. Article 10 of the covenant stated, "The members of the League undertake to respect and preserve as against external aggression the territorial integrity and existing political independence of all members of the League." Dr Barbour's answer was realistic and preceptive; he wrote, "I think in the event of your country being threatened, the League would certainly endeavour to protect her – but the remoteness of the frontiers of your country would probably make it impossible to send military help. The question whether effective moral pressure could be brought to bear on China, if she ever meditated aggression is bound up with the doubtful future of China herself and the unknown character of the government or governments which she may have in the coming years. Meantime China has gained her place on the council of the League, so is very clearly pledged to respect the freedom of other states."

The League of Nations had grown out of the desire for collective security. There is no doubt that in the event of Chinese military invasion there would be nothing the League could have done, partly because of Tibet's remoteness. It was evident that during the Japanese invasion of Manchuria and Italy's invasion of Abyssinia, the League of Nations remained totally ineffective.

In retrospect the question is not one of whether Tibet could have joined the League of Nations or not, but one which concerns the nature of the questions presented by Palhese to Dr. Barbour; questions revealing Tibet's perception and concerns of the period. For the 13th Dalai Lama, the issue of Tibet's status became paramount. At the same time he did not want to change the existing social order of things, especially the Buddhist Religion in pursuit of international recognition for Tibet's independence. Palhese stated in his letter, "Our customs are often different to those of Europe and America, and we do not wish to change them."

On 12th December Palhese replied to Dr. Barbour, stating, "I would prefer not to do anything more at present, as it is necessary to keep the matter private. I am leaving for Tibet early in February so that before long I shall be able to ascertain how the question is regarded in Lhasa."

Palhese entrusted Sir Charles Bell with continued correspondence with Dr. Barbour. On 5th January, (Sir Charles) Bell wrote to Dr. Barbour, saying the "Kusho Palhese would like me to meet Professor G. Murray or Lord Cecil on his behalf it would keep the matter more private than if he met one of them himself." On the 9th January 1928 Sir Charles Bell received a letter from Professor G. Murray in which he suggested a possible meeting between the two on Saturday 14th January (1928). This is the last letter in the collection and there is no way of knowing whether the meeting between Sir Charles Bell and Professor Murray took place or not. On 3rd February (1928) Palhese left England for Calcutta.

* I would like to thank India Office Library & Records for the permission to quote from Bell's collection and here I have reproduced two letters as appendix with permission of the Board of the British Library.

Appendix 1
(Letter from Palhese to Dr. Barbour.)

The Willows
Wikingham [sic] New Road
Crowthorne, Berks.
5th Dec 1927

Dear Dr. Barbour

I think you understand well about the objects and powers of the League of Nations. It has come to my mind to think whether it would be good for Tibet to join it. My Government have not given me any instructions whatever about this, so please do not mention it to anybody. It is simply my own idea, and would not do for any others especially Chinese or Russians, to hear about this at this stage.

Would there be any objections to Tibet joining the League of Nations? We are an independent nation. China has claimed suzerainty over us, but we have never admitted this. Fifteen years ago we fought with the Chinese and drove them all out, the Chinese Amban and his soldiers, and since we have, governed our own country without any interference from China or other nation.

But from our own point of view I have doubts.

(a) Would the League of Nations harm the Tibetan religion? The League of Nations does much good work in the promotion of material objects, but to Tibet the chief object of all is the maintenance of her own religion and the independence of her country.

(b) Would the League of Nations try to make Tibet bring her internal customs into harmony with those of other nations?

(c) If Tibet joins the League of Nations, she must be friendly with the other nations who belong to it. Some of them may wish to send representatives to Tibet, the travellers of others may wish to penetrate the country. These representatives and travellers may press inconvenient questions on the Tibetan Government. Our customs are often different to those of Europe and America, and we do not wish to change them.

(d) Most important of all. If the Chinese should threaten to invade Tibet, would the League of Nations help Tibet? Would it, for example, say, "This is a domestic concern of you two, we can not intervene." I do not suppose so, for by admitting Tibet to the League of Nations, the latter recognises her as an independent state, not as a vassal of China, but unless we could be reassured on this point, our expense would all go for nothing.

I should indeed be most grateful if you could enlighten me on the above.

Yours sincerely
(Signed Palhese)

Dewan Bahadur

Appendix 2
Reply to Palhese's letter from Dr. Barbour, the letter
is dated 9th Dec 1927.

Dear Kusho Palhese,

I am very glad to have your letter of 5th Dec, and to know that you are considering the relation of your country to the League of Nations, and I feel it an honour to do what I can to answer your questions, but I ought to explain, that while I am a student of the League of Nations' work and speak a good deal about it, I have never held any official position in it. You probably know that we have a strong unofficial society of the League of Nations Union, with which I am connected; and I should suggest that when you are in London, you might arrange to see one of the leading men in the union; either Lord Cecil, or Professor Gilbert Murray. Both have been representatives at Geneva, and know the workings of the League itself from the inside, but neither is a member of the Government at the present time, so that either could speak impartially, and you would not feel in consulting him that you were doing more than making a private enquiry. If you care, I could easily write to Professor Murray, asking him either to see you himself, or to introduce you to Lord Cecil. But I shall not write to any one till I hear from you as I understand your desire to keep the matter entirely private. I shall now answer your questions as far as I can, though you will, of course, understand that my knowledge is not so great as that of men who have done responsible work at Geneva. You will find the conditions of admission to the League of Nations set out on pages 7 & 8 of the enclosed little copy of the covenant (Article 2) and the membership on pages 4 & 5. I have little doubt that Thibet would be recognised as a "fully self-governing state," so there should be no difficulty there.

Questions a and b.

It is certain that the League of Nations would not interfere with the religious beliefs and customs of the member states. The League includes Persia, a Moslem state, as well as Japan, China and Siam, which profess Buddhism or other faiths of the Far East. Neither would the League "try to make Thibet bring her internal customs into harmony with those of other nations." The only exception to the rule of non-interference with domestic questions are –;

- (1) That the league endeavours to prevent one country harming another by export of dangerous drugs, or by similar abuses, which your country does not practice, and
- (2) That it endeavours to secure, "humane conditions of labour," by prohibiting for example [the] labour of women and children in industry. But this is done by agreement not by compulsion.

Question c.

I have more difficulty in answering this question as to the opening up of Thibet to travellers from other countries. It is certainly the case that existing members of the League are prepared to receive travellers for a peaceful purpose.

Question d.

I think in the event of your country being threatened, the League would certainly endeavour to protect her (see Article 10 of the covenant) but the remoteness of the

frontier of your country would probably make it impossible to send military help. The question whether effective moral pressure could be brought to bear on China, if she ever meditated aggression, is bound up with the doubtful future of China herself and the unknown character of the Government or Governments which she may have in the coming years.

In the meantime, China has gained her place on the Council of the league, so is very clearly pledged to respect the freedom of other states.

I enclose one or two pamphlets which may be useful to you for reference.

We had good news from Miss Mary Scott, when she was visiting Palestine on her way back to Sikkim. . . . ,

Believe me,
Very truly yours,

(signed Dr G. F. Barbour)

A. H. FRANCKE'S *LA DVAGS* *KYI AG BAR*

The first Tibetan newspaper*

John Bray

Source: *The Tibet Journal* XIII(3) (1988): pp. 58–63. Change (ag bar for Akhbar) at request of the author.

A. H. Francke is best known for his pioneering researches into the languages, history and archaeology of Ladakh and Lahul which were published in a number of specialist journals and in such works as *A History of Western Tibet* (London, 1907), and *The Antiquities of Indian Tibet* (Calcutta, 1914, 1926). Francke's scholarly interests emerged from his career as a Moravian missionary and in an earlier paper I reviewed his parallel literary work as a Bible translator.¹ This article discusses his and his successors' activities in yet another field – as editors of the earliest Tibetan-language newspaper which was initially known as the *La dvags kyi ag bar*.

Francke was born in Silesia, Germany, in 1870 and first came to Ladakh in 1896. By that time the Moravians had already been active in the region for over four decades. The first Moravian missionaries visited Ladakh in 1855 hoping to be able to travel from there to Mongolia but, having been turned back from the Tibetan frontier three times, decided to found a mission station in Kyelang, Lahul, instead.² Many of their early converts came from Ladakh and the missionaries made annual visits to the region before opening a permanent mission station in Leh in 1885. Francke himself opened the second Ladakhi station in Khalatse in 1899.

From the very beginning the missionaries ran their own publishing operation using a lithographic press. Their first Tibetan-language publication, a collection of Old Testament stories translated by H. A. Jaeschke, appeared as early as 1858 – only a little over a year after he had begun his Tibetan studies. This was followed by an extended series of Christian tracts, extracts from the Bible, and textbooks for local students in subjects ranging from Tibetan to Astronomy. In 1866 Jaeschke published his *Romanized Tibetan-English Dictionary* on the Kyelang mission press. This was an interim work pending the completion and publication of his classic *Tibetan-English Dictionary* in London in 1881. Francke's own publications on the mission press included a life of Jesus, *Skyabs mgon Yeshu* which was written in Ladakhi dialect as opposed to the literary Tibetan which the missionaries used for their Bible translations.³ He also published pamphlets containing collections of Ladakhi proverbs, folk-tales and rock inscriptions and sent copies to scholars in Europe, as modern academics

sometimes distribute photocopies of the first drafts of their papers. Many of Francke's pamphlets were subsequently revised and published in academic journals or in the *Antiquities of Indian Tibet*.⁴

In 1904 Francke had the idea of using the lithographic press to publish a monthly newspaper, the *La dvags kyi ag bar* or 'Ladakh News'. He intended it to be educational in the broadest sense in that he hoped it would popularize an unfamiliar concept of secular, or at least non-Buddhist, writing.⁵ He pointed out that whereas in Europe there was a whole range of novels and other non-religious literature, most Tibetan books were associated with Buddhism. In his view, people all too often read these books for ritual purposes, in order to gain 'merit', without taking a close interest in their contents.

Obviously, nobody would read the newspaper with the intention of gaining 'merit'. To emphasize that the paper was primarily a secular publication Francke wrote the text in cursive Tibetan script, as opposed to the *U-chen* script used in religious books. At the same time he employed a style of language which, while conforming to traditional Tibetan grammatical and spelling rules, was nevertheless as close as possible to the colloquial. He hoped that once people had become accustomed to the newspaper they might prove more receptive to the Moravian Mission's more specifically Christian publications.

The paper consisted of four quarto-sized sheets arranged in columns and was divided into three main sections. The first section consisted of world news culled from Indian papers such as the *Bombay Guardian*. Not surprisingly, Ladakhi readers showed no particular enthusiasm for reports on the speeches of European statesmen of whom they had never heard, but did display considerable interest in news of Tibet. In 1904 the most newsworthy Tibetan story was the Younghusband expedition to Lhasa. Francke remarks that his readers doubted the newspaper's veracity when it reported that Tibetan troops, equipped with protective amulets had proved vulnerable to British bullets, but subsequently local Ladakhis encountered Tibetan prisoners of war in Simla and the paper's credibility was confirmed.

News from more distant countries proved harder to interpret. Francke explained about sea-battles in the Russo-Japanese War to one of his Ladakhi helpers but was rather taken aback to find that when the latter came to write down the story he used the word for 'river' rather than the word for 'ocean', suggesting an image of battleships on the Indus. Even when this mistake was corrected, local readers found the story hard to understand. Even if the Russians and Japanese did wish to blow each other up, it was not entirely clear why they had to go to sea first.

The paper also included Ladakhi news. Mindful of the influence of the press in Europe, Francke tried to use the paper to expose a local corruption story. It appears that the official in charge of paying postal runners their wages of Rs. 5 per month was intimidating his employees into signing for the full amount while actually paying them less. Since they were paid one at a time there were no witnesses. Francke reported the story without mentioning names – but to no avail. His readers thought it was an amusing anecdote but failed to connect it to local circumstances. Francke remarks that he had similar problems with his sermons.

The second part of the paper consisted of a local Ladakhi text. Here the choice of subject matter reflects Francke's other interests. He confessed that he found Tibetan literary texts less than enthralling because they were so repetitive but pointed out that

folk-songs and folk-tales often expressed emotions and ideas which were quite accessible even to readers from a European cultural background. He, therefore, thought they were well worth including in the newspaper although, constrained by 'Victorian' tastes, he also remarks that the stories contained elements which were not quite seemly for a Christian publication. The more offensive passages were censored out.

As an alternative to folk-tales, the second section of the paper also included a series of extracts from the *La dvags rgal rabs*, the Ladakhi royal chronicles which had first been studied by Francke's predecessor, Dr Karl Marx, and were to form the basis of his own historical researches. Francke remarks that the Ladakhis enjoyed these extracts because, although they were somewhat dry, they nevertheless recalled the past glories of the kingdom of Ladakh before it was subjugated by the Dogras and then incorporated into Jammu and Kashmir.

The third part of the paper was the most specifically evangelistic. Francke used one of the Ladakhi proverbs he had been collecting to express a Christian message. The first such proverb ran, 'If the Lama is himself not perfect, how can he guide the dying [to a better re-birth]?', and the paper went on to explain that the only truly sinless great lama was Jesus Christ.⁶

The *La dvags kyī ag bar* never achieved the sort of circulation figures that would excite a European newspaper magnate. For the first edition the press brought out 150 copies but this soon settled down to a circulation of some 60 copies an issue, of which 20 copies were sent to Darjeeling for distribution by missionaries there. The main problem was the difficulty of distribution in a mountainous area with poor postal services: there were regular deliveries along the main trade routes but not in the more remote villages. Francke solved this problem by selling the paper to representatives from these villages in Leh Bazaar. Each paper was passed to several readers and thus reached the most isolated districts of Ladakh and even crossed the frontier to Tibet itself.

Francke moved from Ladakh to Kyelang, Lahul, in 1906, handing over the editorship to his missionary colleagues in Leh. In 1907 they changed the name to *La dvags pho nya* or 'Ladakh Herald' (*pho nya* was also the word used by Jaeschke for 'angel' in his Bible translations) but it seems that the paper folded a year later.

However, in 1927, Walter Asboe, one of Francke's successors in Kyelang, revived the Moravian journalistic tradition by publishing a monthly paper called the *Kyelang kyī ag bar* (the 'Kyelang News').⁷ He first tried to use the old lithographic press but, finding this too difficult, resorted to a 'plex' duplicator instead. The *Kyelang kyī ag bar* had a circulation of some 40 copies. Asboe claimed that 'the lamas who form the bulk of the literati in this country scan the paper with avidity' but it also went much further afield – to the Berlin State Library and Professor Giuseppe Tucci among other subscribers. Its format was similar to Francke's paper: in 1931 a typical issue consisted of one of Aesop's fables, local news, an article on domestic hygiene, and world news.⁸

In addition to his literary endeavours, Asboe was a man with strong practical interests and the paper reflects this. He tried to use its columns to 'teach the people improved methods of farming, sanitation, personal hygiene and urging the peasants to reduce the consumption of their locally grown barley in the form of beer and conserve the crop for food purposes'.⁹ His efforts to inculcate a new method of cultivating potatoes failed but he proudly reported some success with an 'illustrated article on the

manufacture of a combustion stove calculated to effect considerable economy in the use of fuel’.

In 1936, Asboe moved back to Leh where he continued to publish his newspaper, reviving the name *La dvags pho nya*. A Biblical text under the paper’s masthead established its Christian identity but the main part of the contents was devoted to local and international news. Initially, Asboe must have culled his information from the press but from 1937 he was able to monitor international developments by listening to radio broadcasts.

One of the news highlights of 1936 was a special number patriotically celebrating the coronation of King George VI but over the following years the headlines concentrated on rather more gloomy European political developments which were then leading up to the outbreak of the Second World War.

The front page of the paper was always illustrated with a simple sketch, usually a scene from Ladakhi domestic life such as a woman spinning. Other illustrations included a sketch map of Europe showing Germany’s claim to parts of Czechoslovakia and Poland; a drawing of a German soldier in uniform; a parachutist jumping out of an aeroplane; and a striking caricature of a skull peering out from behind a ‘mask’ of Hitler’s face.

As in Francke’s time, the paper also included texts from Ladakhi history: in 1938 and 1939 it serialized extracts from a Khalatse villager’s reminiscences of the Dogra war which had been recorded by Francke and were subsequently published in *The Antiquities of Indian Tibet*.

The *La dvags pho nya* temporarily closed down once again when Asboe left Ladakh in 1947 but the Moravian Mission’s publishing activities resumed five years later under the leadership of Pierre Vittoz, a Swiss Missionary, and Eliyah Tsetan Phuntsog. Tsetan Phuntsog was a high-ranking Ladakhi who had served as *tehsildar*, but also a Tibetan scholar of some note, having studied for two years at Rizong monastery before he became a Christian. As a natural development of his literary interests he experimented with a revised form of Ladakhi spelling to make the written language closer to the spoken. This proved a highly unpopular experiment among local Buddhists because it was interpreted as a blasphemous attempt to subvert the classical language of the scriptures.¹⁰

Although Tsetan Phuntsog and Vittoz published a number of short tracts using the reformed Ladakhi spelling, the newspaper itself was written in good classical Tibetan – ‘in a style elaborate enough to please all varieties of bookworms’ according to Vittoz.¹¹ In addition to news the first edition contained an extract from the biography of St Francis, a Tibetan legend and a section on hygiene.¹² The initial run of 50 copies was soon exhausted and 20 more had to be printed. During this period expensively-produced Chinese propaganda pamphlets in Tibetan were trickling across the border and Vittoz remarked that the *La dvags phonya* which was still prepared on a simple rotary duplicator, looked scrappy in comparison. But it was still a source of pride that the only Tibetan-language newspapers resisting communist atheism were the Moravian paper in Ladakh and a similar publication produced, in Kalimpong by Rev G. Tharchin who had himself been brought up as a Moravian in Poo, Kinnaur.¹³

Vittoz left Ladakh in 1956 and in 1959 Tsetan Phuntsog joined him in Mussoorie, Uttar Pradesh, where they collaborated on a revised Tibetan translation of the New Testament. After they left there was no one to continue the newspaper but the name

La dvags pho nya was briefly revived in 1978 and 1979 as the title of a government news sheet edited by Tashi Rabgias.

Tashi Rabgias, who now edits the *Voice of the Himalaya* a news letter published in Ladakhi and English by the Ladakh Cultural Forum, is one of the leading figures of the current generation of Ladakhi writers. His own publications include a distinguished history of Ladakh and he has also edited the first of a series of Ladakhi folktales published in Leh by the Jammu and Kashmir Cultural Academy. The Academy publishes quarterly and annual periodicals and there are now even a handful of Ladakhi novels. Ladakhi local publishing activities, similar to those pioneered by Francke and his colleagues, now continue in other hands.

Notes

* Paper presented to a conference on Ladakh at the School of Oriental and African Studies, London University, December 1987.

- 1 John Bray. 'A History of the Moravian Church's Tibetan Bible Translations'. In *Wissenschaftsgeschichte und gegenwertige Forschungen in Nordwest-Indien*. Edited by Peter Neumann with Gudrun Meier (Bautzen, German Democratic Republic: Verlag Domowina, forthcoming in 1988).
- 2 For more details see: John Bray. 'A History of the Moravian Church In India'. In *The Himalayan Mission* (Leh: Moravian Church, 1985) pp. 27-75.
- 3 A. H. Francke. *Die Mitarbeit der Brudergemeine bei der Erforschung Zentralasiens* (Herrnhut: Verlag der Missionsbuchhandlung, 1909).
- 4 A bibliography of Francke's books and articles on Ladakh is included in: John Bray with Nawang Tsering Shakspo. *A Bibliography of Ladakh* (Warminster: Aris and Phillips, forthcoming in 1988).
- 5 A. H. Francke. 'Die Redaktionspult der tibetischen Zeitung'. *Missionsblatt aus der Brudergemeine* 70 (1906), Nos. 11, 12. Other comments by A. H. Francke cited in this article come from the same source.
- 6 'Eine literarische Neuheit'. *Missionsblatt aus der Brudergemeine* 68 (1904), p. 99.
- 7 *Periodical Accounts Relating to Moravian Missions* 1928, p. 168. London: Moravian Church.
- 8 Moravian Church House, London, Tibet Reports: Letter from Walter Asboe, 10th March, 1931.
- 9 Moravian Church House, London. Walter Asboe typescripts: Vol. 12 'Notes and Articles Written on Tibet'. Letter from W. Asboe to J. Connor, 5th April 1932.
- 10 Pierre and Catherine Vittoz. *Un Autre Himalaya* (Lausanne: Editions du soc, 1958), pp. 172-175.
- 11 Moravian Church House, Tibet Reports: letters from Pierre Vittoz, 19th December 1952.
- 12 Moravian Church House, Tibet Reports: letter from Pierre Vittoz, 17th June 1952.
- 13 *Periodical Accounts* 1953, p. 56. A page from Tharchin's paper is reproduced in *Tibet Journal* 8 (1983) No. 1, p. 57.

THE DALAI LAMA, THE ARMY, AND THE MONASTIC SEGMENT

Melvyn C. Goldstein

Source: M. C. Goldstein (with the help of Gelek Rimpoche), *A History of Modern Tibet, 1913–1951: The Demise of the Lamaist State*, Berkeley: University of California Press, 1989, pp. 89–138. Reprinted by kind permission of the University of California Press, Berkeley. Illustrations omitted.

Tsarong's proposal to triple the Tibetan army generated a classic confrontation among three major factions. The first faction, a group of military commanders led by Tsarong, the commander-in-chief, were committed to Tibetan independence from China.¹ They believed that military strength, not the prayers of the monks, had paved the way for the Dalai Lama to return to Tibet in 1912. Relatively young, energetic, and modern in their attitude, they possessed an esprit de corps unique in Tibet. Because they were committed to modernization, others considered them to be a threat to the religious domination of the Gelugpa State. Ostentatious in their adoption of Western (British) uniforms, dress, and customs such as sweet tea, shaking hands, and playing tennis and polo, and generally secular in orientation and demeanor, the commanders appeared to challenge the very essence of the monastery-dominated political system. Tsarong once sarcastically told Sir Charles Bell that raising additional troops was easy; all the government had to do was to remove the thousands of useless *dobdo* ("fighting") monks from the Three Seats.² This type of outspoken secularism alienated the military commanders from the monks and their supporters.

The apparent unity of purpose and camaraderie of the military commanders made them an extraordinarily dangerous force in Tibetan politics. Although not a political party in the normal sense, they shared the view that the ultra-conservative monks had brought Tibet to its knees in the past and would do so again unless the central government developed its own power.

The power of the military derived predominantly from Tsarong's unique position. Simultaneously he held the three important posts of shape, commander-in-chief, and head of the Tibetan mint and armory. Even more important, he was one of the Dalai Lama's closest favorites, almost a member of his family. Though he had acquired through marriage the name of an important aristocratic family, his position was due, rather, to the 13th Dalai Lama's policy of advancing those he personally trusted. But the military faction's dependence on the Dalai Lama for its power was also its weakness. Their views and attitudes did not represent basic changes in Tibetan society. They commanded no popular support, and they did not attempt to win such support.

The second main faction, represented by the Three Seats, was vehemently opposed to the proposed expansion of the army and to most other forms of modernization or change. Their primary loyalty was to Buddhism and the Gelugpa monastic order rather than to any nationalistic entity called Tibet. They were committed to the Tibetan government only so long as it furthered the interests of the Gelugpa sect's version of Tibetan Buddhism. For the monks, Tibet was a uniquely Buddhist country whose religious character had to be maintained at all costs. They also believed that they were the ones most qualified to determine what was in the best interests of religion.

From the monastic point of view, military expansion cut right to the heart of their traditional power, draining resources that otherwise went to the monastic system and also neutralizing the coercive force of the large number of uneducated and fighting monks. They saw Tsarong's proposal as a shift to secularism, to the diffusion of alien (and heathen) British ideas which would harm Buddhism by creating an aristocracy less inclined to act as patrons of the monasteries. For the monks, nothing less than Tibet's unique theocratic political system and the dominant position of the monastic segment were at stake.

A third faction was comprised of conservative government officials. Led by the powerful and stern Drönyerchemmo Temba Dargye (commonly known as Ara gaapo ["white beard"]), and including a number of important monk and lay officials such as Kusante Shape, this faction's interests fell between the other two. While committed to maintaining, if not actually strengthening, the central government, they were also committed to the view of Tibet as a religious state under the Dalai Lama; thus, they too were extremely apprehensive about the pro-Western military faction. They opposed the excessive power of the monastic segment, but they shared the monastic fear that a large and powerful army would create economic hardship and tilt the balance of power toward the hands of the young, radical group officers who fostered Western customs.

As the 1920s began, feelings ran high. The military officers' often ostentatious adoption of the customs of the heathen British made it seem that they were bent on discarding the traditional culture. The Drönyerchemmo Ara gaapo used to delight in referring to them as monkeys, because one could see their legs when, in place of the traditional Tibetan robe, they wore their Western uniforms.

Several Lhasa street songs from this time reflect the resentment and disdain many Tibetans felt at the penetration of British customs and ideas not only into the military but also into the general populace:

Drinking sweet tea [in teashops] is a sign you have no house.
[Wearing] the brocade hat with two flaps
is a sign [a woman] has no headdress [and is poor].³

Putting on rouge and makeup
is a sign [a woman] is ugly.
Eating *khogön* [flat bread]
is a sign you have no *tsamba* [i.e., are poor].⁴

Eating *khogön*, a flat bread made from flour, drinking sweet milk-tea in restaurants, wearing makeup, and abandoning the large traditional woman's headdress all symbolized to many Tibetans the deterioration of traditional values and customs.

Three pivotal incidents involving the three factions occurred between 1921 and 1924. The first occurred in 1921 and, for the first time, caused the Dalai Lama to consider the threat a large army might pose to his position.

Tsarong's proposal to increase the Tibetan army was supported independently by Sir Charles Bell, who arrived in Lhasa in November 1920 at the invitation of the Dalai Lama. Bell informally advised the Dalai Lama that to protect Tibet's borders from China effectively, he would have to increase the Tibetan army to about 15,000.⁵

A proposal to increase the military was eventually placed before the National Assembly, where it met with strong monastic opposition. This opposition is reflected in the comments made to a British official in 1921 by an important monastic official:

The Tibetans have heard that the Tibetan Government wants to raise 15,000 troops with a view to defending themselves against Chinese aggression. It is believed that you [Bell] gave this advice. The people are unwilling to agree to this proposal and say what benefit would they derive by making friends with the British if they have got to raise an army and fight the Chinese.

The Kusho [Chamön Depa] thinks there would be no objection to raising about 500 troops in Kham every year and trained for service. He, however, thinks that even an army of 20,000 troops cannot keep back the Chinese, should they invade Tibet at any future time when all their internal troubles are settled. But he says that if the Chinese attack Tibet, every monk and layman will fight to the last and they expect some military assistance from the British Government.⁶

The monks were willing to put up with a British connection if it relieved the external danger which was being used to justify a military buildup; they were thus very anxious to see the Simla Treaty signed and sealed by the three governments as soon as possible.⁷ It was universally held at this time that Britain was letting Tibet down by failing to force China to come to terms.

Bell himself, realizing the strong opposition of the monastic segment, sent a message to the Dalai Lama through the Gyantse trade agent David MacDonald on 19 or 20 January which advised increasing the army only gradually, by 500 to 1,000 people per year; recruiting soldiers from outlying areas; and not financing this action by taking back estates from the monasteries or aristocrats. The Dalai Lama had come to the same conclusions and informed MacDonald that "he is very pleased with . . . [Bell's] proposal."⁸

On 25 January 1921 the Dalai Lama told Bell that the National Assembly had proposed that 500 or 600 troops should be added yearly until the total number reached 17,000, or roughly a twenty-year buildup.⁹ This was a far cry from Tsarong's original plan, but it was enough to create a very tense and volatile situation in Lhasa. The Tibetan New Year was to begin in a few weeks, on 8 February. It was widely feared that fighting would break out between the soldiers and monks during the Great Prayer Festival, when about 20,000 monks would be in Lhasa, which was under the control of Drepung monastery. Many families sent their valuables for safety to the countryside. Rumors abounded that the British were sending troops to support the Tibetan army against the monasteries, and posters were put up telling people to

kill Bell and Lt. Col. R. S. Kennedy, a physician in the Indian Medical Service who had accompanied Bell.¹⁰ This behavior infuriated the Dalai Lama, who issued an order to the Lhasa magistrates (the *mipön*):

Why are people hiding away their valuables? A sahib has come to Lhasa with the object of making a treaty. The British are not going to make war on Tibet, let me know which nation is going to do so. Or if there is going to be a civil war in Tibet itself, I require to be told who is going to make such war. But if there is not going to be fighting, why are people hiding their property without cause? Every householder must sign a written statement for my perusal, stating whether he has sent away his property or not.¹¹

Despite the bravado, the Dalai Lama himself was nervous about what the monks might do during the Mönlam Festival. He told Bell:

The mass of the monks do not consider their actions; they act without thinking (lit. “act straight on”). I am always afraid that they will cause bloodshed at the great festivals in Lhasa. . . . when thousands are collected, it is difficult to say afterwards who had started a fight. I am thinking of employing soldiers this time to keep the peace.¹²

Bell conveys the atmosphere of tension at the Butter-Sculpture Festival in Lhasa on the fifteenth of the Tibetan First Month.

Tsa-rong now arrives in a highly excited condition. While walking by the Dalai Lama’s side with the other Ministers he felt safe. But being so strongly hated by the monks, he felt afraid to return to his house with only one or two servants. . . . he feared lest a monk in one of the dark little rooms should assassinate him from behind. . . . Tsarong is greatly upset and full of fear on our account also. He carries a loaded revolver, which he presses Kennedy to take, but the latter declines. He sends a dozen soldiers with us. The Peak Secretary [the Dalai Lama’s ADC] now arrives and is also nervous for our safety, thinking it risky for us to go round. So he takes half a dozen stalwart monks armed with thick poles. Our clerks, too. . . . unknown to me also carry loaded revolvers.

Later on, the Dalai Lama told me that – apparently on Tsa-rong’s suggestion – he ordered that soldiers as well as a guard of monks should go round with us, though he himself considered that a guard of monks was sufficient. The latter, he said, was necessary, as monks are headstrong, and one never knows what may happen with numbers of them at night.¹³

In order to minimize the likelihood of violence, the Dalai Lama made Lhasa off limits to the military, and he warned the abbots and other monastic leaders that the monks must be kept under strict control. He threatened that if fighting were to break out, the monasteries would suffer and their officials would be severely punished. The Great Prayer Festival of 1921 passed without incident, but military-monk tensions remained high.

Immediately following the New Year's celebrations, in early March, the National Assembly returned to the issue of the growth of the military. During one session on raising income for the new regiments – particularly on whether this should come from the estates traditionally given as income to the army commanders and shapes¹⁴ – the anti-military clique arranged to exclude all military officers as delegates. This outraged the army officers.¹⁵ They met at the Bodyguard Regiment Headquarters, and Tshögaw, the wildest and most fearless of the commanders, complained bitterly that

the Assembly is discussing [the future of the military] in that meeting and there is not even one military officer present. It must be because they are going to create extra income out of the estates of the commanders and they thought that we would protest if we were present. However, Sambo [an aristocrat with an extremely large number of estates] was invited to attend and he has been made secretary of the assembly meeting [implying that he would be able to deflect attempts to impose new taxes on the large aristocratic families who could most easily afford to pay more]. Since we do not know why we were not invited to attend, it is better that we go to the assembly meeting and ask one of the tsipöns why.¹⁶

To confront the assembly about the choice of delegates was unprecedented and highly provocative. It could only be seen as a grave challenge to governmental authority. Greeted by only a nervous silence from the other officers, the hotheaded Tshögaw scolded his colleagues: “It is not only the question of the commanders' estates being lost to us now, but there is also the question of all the future commanders who will come after us and the military itself. It is better if we at least ask one of the tsipöns why not even one military officer has been invited to the meeting.”¹⁷

The other officers finally agreed but decided to discuss the issue first with Tsarong. Tsarong concurred and added that while they were there they should call Gacan Demba, the former commander-in-chief, out the meeting and tell him to come to Military Headquarters to give an accounting of the guns and ammunition sent by the British after the Simla Convention (during his term of office). Tsarong had been sending queries about this but had received no answer. Gacan Demba at this time was acting as a secretary of the assembly.¹⁸

Seven military officers went together to the National Assembly and asked to see Chipisey (Ragashar), one of the newer tsipöns who, they felt, was not hostile to their position.¹⁹ Unfortunately for them, he was absent that day, and in his place the powerful and very hostile Lungshar emerged.

Lungshar, like Tsarong, was a forward-thinking favorite of the Dalai Lama who was dedicated to developing a strong central government but did not like Tsarong's blatant bias toward the British. Viewing Tsarong as a major rival, he had tactically allied with the anti-military forces of the Drönyerchemmo Ara gaapo.

The sudden appearance of a group of uniformed military commanders at the door of the assembly placed Lungshar on guard. After hearing what they wanted, he agreed to have seats put in the meeting for them. Had they accepted, Lungshar would of course have been able to say that they had threatened and compelled him to allow their participation. The officers, however, told him that they had not come to demand to be admitted but only to inquire why military officers had been excluded. Lungshar

then revealed that the selection of the assembly members had not been done in the normal way, by the tsipöns, but had been made directly by the Kashag (of which Tsarong was a member). He suggested that if they wanted to find out why this had happened, they should speak with the Kashag.²⁰

The commanders then called out former commander-in-chief Gacan Demba and asked him about the guns and ammunition. Irritated, he told them that he was busy attending the assembly but that all the records were kept in the army headquarters and could be examined without him.²¹

After leaving the assembly, the military officers went directly to Tsa-rong, who told them that he himself had not been attending the Kashag recently, due to his work at the Tibetan mint, but that if Lungshar said the assembly had been selected directly by the Kashag, it must be so.²²

The incident did not end there. The anti-military faction now had something truly scandalous to report to the Dalai Lama. The Drönyerchemmo Ara gaapo knew full well that the Dalai Lama was sensitive about his position and power, and he used the incident to kindle these fears.

The military officers' action also sent waves of talk and suspicion reverberating throughout Lhasa. Rumors spread that this might be the prelude to a coup or that the army might take action against specific opponents. The enemies of the military clique talked about the audacity of the military officers who had come uninvited to the National Assembly and ordered a secretary of the assembly to go to Military Headquarters. This action increased the growing apprehension toward this "foreign-oriented" military force.

Escalation of the incident occurred a few days later, when the leaders of the National Assembly informed Lönchen Sholkang that they had suspended their meetings because they feared the military would try to kill them.²³ This very serious charge by the anti-military forces cleverly forced the government to act.

Sholkang called all the military officers to his house the very next day to rebuke them:

What are you people doing these days? Because of the kindness and compassion of the Dalai Lama, everybody is nice and quiet these days, so what are you military officers doing going to the Assembly and asking such questions? My God, that is something fantastic. What are you people trying to do?²⁴

They argued that they had not specifically called out Lungshar and that Gacan Demba had ignored a number of previous messages from the commander-in-chief's office. They assured the lönchen that they had no intention of threatening the assembly and asked him to try to mediate between the civil and military officials. Sholkang told the officers to return to their work, and for some time nothing more was heard about the incident. But the enemies of Tsarong and the military commanders were planning a second assault.

One day, without warning, the assembly representatives went to the Kashag and Lönchen Sholkang and reiterated their view that the military officers had acted in an anarchical and dangerous fashion by going to the assembly and asking for Lungshar. They also asserted strongly that the commanders had no respect for Tibetan laws and customs and were a danger to the government.

Tsarong did attend that Kashag meeting and later described his feelings to his fellow military officers. He thought he was going to be arrested right then and there and began to look around to see if he could escape. He could not, so he put his hand in his coat pocket, pretending he had a revolver there, and sat in an arrogant pose. As the tension reached an electrifying height, a message arrived telling Tsarong to come to the Dalai Lama at once.²⁵ There is no record of their meeting, but it appears that Tsarong explained his side of the events to the Dalai Lama and thereby alleviated some of the ruler's apprehensions.

Lhasa was now full of such rumors as that Tsarong was going to arrest Lungshar and that Lungshar had sought protection from the monasteries (who had, indeed, given Lungshar a bodyguard of fighting monks). People in Lhasa expected an open confrontation.

Soon after this, the lönchen arranged a face-to-face meeting between the military officers and the assembly representatives, with Lungshar and Shankawa each presenting their side. The military reiterated that they had broken no rules since they had not entered the assembly, but they apologized anyway. Lungshar and Shankawa came to an amicable settlement and even shook hands, Western-style, to indicate their mutual satisfaction with the explanations.²⁶

Just when all seemed settled, the volatile Tshögaw suddenly said loudly to Lungshar, "If you people have doubts and are suspicious about our intentions then it must mean that you all have something bad in your minds since we have no evil plans. It is because of what's in your minds that this has happened." Lungshar angrily replied, "Just now we received advice from the lönchen and we have followed this. Commander Shankawa has explained everything and this has cleared up all our doubts. But now, after we have finished our talks, you suddenly say that we had bad intentions and that this is why we had doubts. This is very serious because you are talking not on the street behind our backs but here in front of all the high authorities. This is very serious and fantastic." Tshögaw continued shouting and arguing. The lönchen's chief aide-de-camp, Gogpala, quickly told the other commanders to take Tshögaw and leave at once, but the damage had been done.

The next day the military officers were summoned to the house of the Drönyerchemmo Ara gaapo, their key enemy among the monk officials. That the Dalai Lama had placed him in charge of the affair clearly indicated to all that the anti-military faction had prevailed. The Drönyerchemmo read them a statement, prepared by the leaders of the assembly, which called for the military to explain their actions.

While the National Assembly was having a meeting about how to raise money to meet military expenses, military officers who were not members of the assembly came and asked questions and also called out Gacan Demba who was acting as a secretary of the assembly and asked him to hand over an accounting for guns, etc. All these events had been told to the lönchen Sholkang, and all the members of the National Assembly, fearing their lives, have sought the protection and support of the lönchen. The lönchen in turn called the military and civil officers to his house for a discussion and there the military officers expressed regret at what they had done and everyone had accepted their explanation. At that time Commander Tshögaw made some

sarcastic remarks to Tsipön Lungshar saying that Lungshar had bad feelings toward the military officers and that is why he has doubts about their intentions. If Tshögaw can say that much to Lungshar's face then this is like the saying that, "When the dog knows well about the stick, not only is he not scared by the stick but he can remove it and carry it himself." Such behavior will destroy the authority of the government if left unresolved. Moreover, the military officers have no experience in politics and are all young and look like little kids who have no understanding. To place weapons in the hands of such children is dangerous. Therefore, the National Assembly requests that all of these military officers be removed.²⁷

The Drönyerchemmo went on to say insultingly that while normally officials would have to answer all of these points in detail and in writing, since the officers were not well versed in the Tibetan language and were all so young, the Dalai Lama had only asked them to state which officer first suggested going to confront the assembly.

Although put on the spot without warning, the army officers demonstrated their unity by defying the Drönyerchemmo and the Dalai Lama and steadfastly insisting that they could not remember who had initiated the idea and that it had been developed jointly. A few days later, the army officers received an order to attend the monk officials' daily tea ceremony (*trungja*) the next day. They arrived at 9 A.M. on 26 March 1921, wearing full military uniform.²⁸ After the second round of tea was served, the anti-military Kusantse Shape came out of the Dalai Lama's room, and an order from the Dalai Lama was read which demoted him as well as the military officers:

Kalön [= Shape] Kheme [= Kusantse] has been acting with nepotism and even this time, although the members of the assembly are normally selected by the tsipöns, the Kashag gave the names of delegates and this created the entire problem. Moreover, making Sambo, who has huge estates, the secretary of the assembly when the question was how to create new income, made this very difficult to do. Consequently, you are now demoted to the rank of seynamba.²⁹

Commander Shankawa, you insisted that you could not name the person who first suggested that the military officers should go to the assembly meeting. Although this really requires a full and thorough inquiry, since you have served well as commander and have completed the construction of the Palace in the Bodyguard Regiment Headquarters, therefore you are demoted from the rank of commander but should remain as an ordinary lay official [*gyüma*]. You should carry on the duties of army commander until a new one is appointed. Tshögaw, you were appointed an army commander because you volunteered many times for [difficult] work. You did not get along well with the volunteer troops but still were appointed to the Trapchi Regiment. But again there you couldn't get along well with your colleagues so you were called here for inquiries and while under investigation, you made more trouble with the other military officers. And recently, when Lönchen Sholkang gave an explanation and everyone accepted his advice, again you told Lungshar that it was his own bad ideas that caused the trouble and used bad language. Because of this you are demoted to the rank of regular official [*gyüma*].

Lungshar, you were asked by the military officers not to tell the Assembly about their visit but you did so anyway and created much misunderstanding and problems. So your punishment is to pay a fine of 27 gold coins.

The rest of the military officers are fined from 18 to 30 gold coins based on your actions in the affair, and the other Assembly and Trungtsi members are fined 15 gold coins for calling a halt to the Assembly Meeting. Furthermore, from now on, on top of whatever representatives are normally appointed to the Assembly, one military officer will be added.³⁰

By and large the military were the losers in the National Assembly incident. They obtained representation in the assembly and the elimination of Kusantse, the shape who opposed their aims, but the Dalai Lama demoted two of their most capable officers, thus warning Tsarong that the military must not become too arrogant and too insensitive to traditional values. Despite his deep affection for Tsarong, the Dalai Lama had let the military know that he would not allow them to make decisions for him. While the creation of a strong military still remained a priority for the Dalai Lama, over the next four years he would increasingly come to view the military not as his own power base, but as another threat to his position.

In that same year another incident occurred which brought the military partway back into the Dalai Lama's good graces. The relations between the Dalai Lama and Loseling college of Drepung monastery had been strained for years. The Tengyeling (Demo) Conspiracy and, more important, the support Loseling gave the Chinese during the fighting in 1911-1912 when the Dalai Lama's volunteer army was trying to drive the Chinese out of Lhasa had infuriated the Dalai Lama. Led by Loseling college's three managers (the *tshaja*, *phuja*, and *gongja*), Drepung monastery had adhered to a pro-Chinese and anti-Dalai Lama policy.³¹ When the Dalai Lama's officials ordered them to send monks to help fight the Chinese, they refused, saying that they were monks, not soldiers. They agreed to fight only if the Chinese tried to force their way into Drepung itself. Many of the Loseling officials such as the *tshaja* were from Chinese-administered parts of Kham and tended to have pro-Chinese, anti-government leanings. This was well known to the Manchu amban; when he had to flee for his life, he went to Drepung, where he was sheltered in a mountaintop retreat until the fighting was over.³²

Loseling's behavior warranted punishment, but during the period from 1913 to 1919, the Dalai Lama was too preoccupied with the Simla Talks and the warfare in Kham to confront Loseling. But by late 1920 no such restraints existed, so when a dispute arose in Loseling college, the Dalai Lama took the opportunity to attack its leaders.

The incident began in late 1920 when the Loseling managers, led by the *tshaja*, told a former monastic official named Adala that his khamtsen wanted an estate returned.³³ Adala had been holding this estate on "permanent lease" (*khantsin*), paying Loseling a lease fee every year and managing the estate as if it were his own. Believing he had permanent rights to this estate so long as he paid the annual fee, he refused to return it. When the Loseling managers decided to take it by force, Adala complained to an acquaintance, the powerful Drönyerchemmo Ara gaapo, who immediately saw this as an opportunity to strike back at the Loseling managers. He told Adala to petition the government.³⁴

With this petition in hand, the Drönyerchemmo summoned the three Loseling managers to his house sometime in mid to late May 1921.³⁵ When they arrived, they were told to go to Shöl (see Map 3). At Shöl they found the Drönyerchemmo waiting, not to greet them, but to arrest them. Military troops were placed on special guard duty by the jail, and the next day the final order was read to them. Although normally such orders specify the nature of the crime or misdeed, in this case it simply said that “your faults are known to you so there is no need to list them.” The *tshaja* and *phuja* were exiled; their private property was confiscated; and they were whipped and disgraced by being driven out of Lhasa on white oxen.³⁶ The third manager, the *gongja*, was released without punishment, most likely because he had not been in power in 1910–1913.

The monks in Drepung found out about these acts only when the *gongja* returned. They immediately sent food and clothes to the Lhasa prison, but the two managers had already been exiled. All of Loseling’s twenty-four khamtsen then had a meeting to discuss what to do. Led by two monks named Ancanali and Ngogar, they refused to listen to their abbots but decided instead to go en masse to the Norbulinga Palace to demand the release of the two managers.

The monks of nearby Nechung monastery tried to stop the Loseling monks when they saw them pouring out of Drepung, but the several thousand Loseling monks went on to Norbulinga, forcing their monastery officials to accompany them. The guards at the palace gate also could not stop them but let them pass into the grounds and then to the Yellow Wall that surrounds the living area of the Dalai Lama. There the senior monastic officials prostrated and shouted that they wanted to see the Dalai Lama, who was in retreat at that time. They yelled that their managers had done no wrong and so should be released and their property returned. The monks also taunted the troops on guard by the Yellow Wall, daring them to shoot. When they did not, the mob of monks forcibly took the troop’s weapons and broke them. While the senior monks shouted and prostrated, the younger monks urinated and defecated all over the Dalai Lama’s gardens, pulled up and trampled the Dalai Lama’s flowers, broke the statues, and sang as loudly as possible in order to disturb him.³⁷

The Lönchen Sholkang came out to try to calm them. He made the traditional pleading gesture with his thumbs and said, “Please don’t do this. Whatever you have to say, tell me.” But the monks treated him rudely, saying, “Old man, you don’t know anything. We want to see the Dalai Lama.”³⁸

This incident reinforced for the Dalai Lama the importance of having a powerful army. Tsarong, who was hosting a party in his house at the time, was immediately summoned to Norbulinga Palace. However, it was decided that nothing should be done, for if the military in Lhasa were called out and opened fire on the monks, the action would be likely to provoke the other monasteries and colleges to support Loseling and possibly precipitate an all-out civil war. The government’s military position in Lhasa at this time was comprised of roughly 700 soldiers, not an adequate force to control a joint reaction by the Three Seats.³⁹ The Dalai Lama therefore pretended he knew nothing of what had happened. The monks finally left Norbulinga in the afternoon. In the meantime the Dalai Lama and Tsarong had issued orders to recall several thousand troops and militia to Lhasa in preparation for moving on the monastery. They also armed the 700 in Lhasa with live ammunition.⁴⁰

That night Tsarong moved several army units to positions between Norbulinga and Drepung.⁴¹ The Dalai Lama, through Tsarong, ordered Loseling to turn over the

protest ringleaders, but the monks refused. Soldiers were moved in front of Drepung, where they set up camps. Loseling college appealed to the monks of Sera and Ganden, as well as to the monks of Drepung's other major college, Gomang, to support them, and then posted pickets above their monastery.⁴² Various lamas such as Kundeling and Ditru tried to mediate the confrontation, but the monks would not agree to turn over their ringleaders. Sera, however, quickly refused to join Loseling; and later Ganden also refused, as did Drepung's own Gomang college. Loseling was on its own. But since it contained 4,000 to 5,000 monks, it was a formidable opponent. The monks threatened to attack Norbulinga and Lhasa, and said they would seize the Drönyerchemmo, whom they saw as their main enemy in this fight.⁴³

By the second week in August the Tibetan government had massed about 3,000 troops in Lhasa and now felt confident that they could handle the monks. Loseling college was to be taught a lesson, if possible without bloodshed. The Dalai Lama had just demoted two of the most capable officers, Shankawa and Tshögaw. He now needed them, so he ordered the Drönyerchemmo Ara gaapo to ask them to become army commanders once again. Shankawa said no, but Tshögaw, hotheaded as usual, enthusiastically agreed, saying that he would "kill all those bald-headed ones [*go riri*]." He also wryly noted that he was like silverware that is polished by the government when needed for some ceremony, then put away afterward. So Tshögaw was given a regiment, and he, Doring, Trentong, and Tsarong led the action against Drepung.⁴⁴

The government troops were deployed in a semicircle in front of the monastery. They were under strict orders from the Dalai Lama not to fire at the monastery, however, since this might generate widespread sympathy for the monks. In the meantime, demands were renewed to the monks to turn over the leaders of the demonstration.⁴⁵

Loseling found itself in an untenable situation. It was without support from either the Sera or the Ganden monastery, or even from Gomang college in their own monastery; it had been unable to get the Khamba community in Lhasa to lend military support; and it was blocked by a large army force led by Tsarong and Tshögaw, both of whom were unlikely to have qualms about taking on the monks militarily. Loseling therefore surrendered eleven ringleaders by mid-September.⁴⁶ Others who had run away, such as Ancanali, were captured in caves on the mountains behind Drepung during an all-out search in which the government ordered all district officials to seize and hold any Loseling monk who passed their way.⁴⁷ The government even interrupted a teaching by Taktra Rimpoche in his hermitage north of Lhasa to see if Ancanali might be there.⁴⁸

All told, about sixty monks were arrested, paraded around the city, lightly flogged, and placed in shackles with cangues on their necks. They were then put under the custody of various aristocratic families. The Dalai Lama dismissed all the Drepung abbots and passed a rule giving himself the right, for the first time, to appoint the managers of Drepung's khamtsen. He also imposed a new rule whereby these managers were chosen only from among the monks from Central Tibet. This was done to decrease the power of the Eastern Tibetan (Khamba) monks, whom the Dalai Lama saw as more pro-Chinese and less amenable to control by the central government.⁴⁹

For the first time in modern Tibetan history, the government's army had confronted the monks directly and forced them to concede. Although not a single shot was fired, the monks' fears about the newly developed Tibetan military were shown to be valid. The Loseling incident of 1921 represents a major turning point in the relationship

between the government and the Three Seats. The Dalai Lama had been able to teach the monasteries a political lesson without shedding blood. The thousands of volatile monks around Lhasa were served notice that they could no longer intimidate the Dalai Lama with impunity. The Dalai Lama later told Bell that "it was necessary for me to make a show of force or else the large monasteries would continually give me trouble"; but he went on to say that he intended to show them leniency.⁵⁰ And in a sense he did. The ringleaders were severely punished, but the monastery and monks were not. No estates were confiscated, as had been done at Tengyeling.⁵¹

A year later, the head of Ganden monastery, the Ganden Thriba, arranged for the Dalai Lama to visit Loseling for the inauguration of a new building. The monks showed the Dalai Lama deference and told him repeatedly that the building had been erected by the exiled *tshaja* in an effort to secure his release. The Dalai Lama replied that he had not realized how much good the *tshaja* had done and would release him if he promised never again to become involved in politics. The *tsbaja*'s release ended the first military-monk confrontation, but although the monks came to terms with the Dalai Lama, they remained bitter enemies of the military clique and the Westernization its ascendancy heralded.

These feelings were exacerbated by another critical incident involving the second greatest Gelugpa incarnate lama, the 9th Panchen Lama, Chökyi Nyima.

The flight of the Panchen Lama

The need to build a strong military and maintain a large army, equipped with modern British rifles, on the Kham border had dramatically increased the expenses of the Tibetan government and resulted in the imposition of a special tax on the great monasteries, including Tashilhunpo, the seat of the Panchen Lama. Outside of the central government, the Panchen Lama was the largest estate-holder in Tibet, possessing not only numerous manorial estates but also ten whole districts.

Considerable ill feeling between the officials of the Dalai Lama and the Panchen Lama had arisen from the Panchen's behavior following the Dalai Lama's flights to exile in 1904 and 1910. When financial support was needed for the large contingent of troops on active duty in Kham, some remembered that during a previous war with Nepal in 1791, when the Gurkha troops attacked Tashilhunpo, the then Panchen Lama had paid one-quarter of all the military costs. The Dalai Lama used this as a precedent and, after returning to Tibet in 1912, informed the Panchen Lama that he had to pay one-fourth of the total military costs of the 1912–1913 Chinese war, as well as one-fourth of the costs of the Tibet-British wars of 1888 and 1904. This amounted to 27,000 *ke* of grain. The Panchen Lama vigorously disagreed with this interpretation and paid only a portion of the sum.⁵²

Dalai-Panchen relations further deteriorated in 1917 when the Dalai Lama instituted a new rule called the Fire-Snake Year Order: the serfs of Tashilhunpo in Gyantse District were to pay one-seventh of the horse and carrying-animal corvée tax on levies of over 100 horses and 300 carrying animals. Since Tashilhunpo had written statements from past Dalai Lamas exempting its serfs from providing such corvée services for anyone but Tashilhunpo, the Panchen Lama viewed this as an illegal abrogation of his prerogatives. In 1923 the Water-Pig Year Order extended the previous order to all Tashilhunpo serfs in Tsang.⁵³ And in 1922, the new Revenue Investigation Office

levied an additional annual tax on Tashilhunpo of about 30,000 *ke* of grain and 10,000 silver coins.⁵⁴

The Panchen Lama and his officials attacked the validity of the new taxes, arguing that their precedent was invalid. They argued that they had paid one-fourth of the Tibetan government's military expenses in 1791 only because their own city and monastery were under attack. They also argued that they could not afford to make such payments and still fulfill their religious obligations to their monks, and they presented documents that granted them tax exemptions. Meanwhile, as they were protesting the decision, each year the unpaid taxes piled up. Lungshar played a major role in this controversy, insisting that the Panchen Lama could pay the new tax. His examination of the records of the Panchen Lama's government documented that they could easily pay the new levy and the *corvée* taxes. He convinced the Dalai Lama that the real motive behind the Panchen Lama's refusal was his ambivalence about the supreme authority of the Dalai Lama. Thus, increasing revenue to support the army produced a major dispute between the Panchen Lama and the central government.

Additional details of this dispute come from the Panchen Lama's approach to the British in India through the Gyantse trade agent, D. MacDonald, asking for help. MacDonald wrote:

I have the honour to report that His Serenity the Tashi [Panchen] Lama sent a messenger to me yesterday with a private letter (which he requested me to return to him) stating as follows:

... That the Lhasa Government has demanded that the Tashi Lhumpo Government should contribute one fourth of the total expenditure for the upkeep of the Tibetan Army, which consists of the following:

- (a) Rs. 650,000/- approximately,
- (b) 10,000 maunds of grain valued at Rs. 80,000/-,
- (c) 2,000 boxes of Chinese brick-tea, valued at Rs. 85,000/-.
- (d) In addition to the above, they have asked for other liberal concessions (not mentioned in the above letter).

... In default of complying with the above demands, I have been informed that the officials of the Tashi Lhumpo Government who are undergoing imprisonment at the Potala Palace will not be released and others will also be imprisoned.

... His Serenity the Tashi Lama states that he is unable to meet the demands made upon him and proposes to submit a representation to His Holiness the Dalai Lama on the subject. If his request is granted, things will then of course be all right; but if not, His Serenity wishes to know whether the Government of India will mediate between himself and His Holiness the Dalai Lama as he states that his only hope is the assistance of the Government of India.⁵⁵

After several unsuccessful protests by his officials and one aborted attempt to escape when he went to the hot springs in Lhatse District,⁵⁶ the Panchen Lama on 26 December 1923 secretly fled to Mongolia, leaving the following instructions for his followers in Tashilhunpo:

Be it known to all the Abbots and Assistants of the four colleges and also to the Acting Prime Minister and the Monk and Lay officials of the Tashi Lhunpo Government: –

With regard to the troubles of the Tashi-Lhunpo Government and their subjects, I have submitted representations to His Holiness the Dalai Lama on several occasions, but my requests have not been granted. At the same time His Holiness has always shown me kindness. The investigating officers listened to the advice of evil-minded persons and made it very difficult for His Holiness to grant my requests. In consequence, orders were issued to all Jongpoens of the Tsang Province that they must supply free transport, etc., to the officials of the Lhasa Government, against the prevailing custom. Moreover, I have been asked to make contributions for the upkeep of the Tibetan Army, but the nobles and subjects were unable to take the responsibility of meeting these demands. For these reasons, the subjects of the Tashi-Lhunpo Government were disappointed and became dissatisfied. You are all aware of these facts and these things have made it quite impossible for us to live in peace. I should have made further representation, but it would have created a difficult position for His Holiness. I am therefore leaving Tashi-Lhunpo for a short period to make it easier for His Holiness the Dalai Lama. I am going to see whether I can secure any one to mediate between us, with the assistance of the dispensers of gifts in Kham and Mongolia whither I have despatched messengers. It is quite impossible for me to make the annual contributions to meet the Military expenses and I am compelled to proceed to an unknown destination to try to raise funds from the Buddhists who may be inclined to help me voluntarily. I may state here once and for all that I have no desire to do anything against the wishes of His Holiness the Dalai Lama or that will be injurious to our prestige. The letter which I have addressed to His Holiness should be at once forwarded, so as to make matters clear to him. After due consideration I have appointed the Acting Prime Minister [of Tashilhunpo] and the Abbots of the four Colleges [of Tashilhunpo] to carry on the administration during my absence. First of all, you should see that the customary ceremonies are performed in the Tashi-Lhunpo and other monasteries as usual. You should also see that the Lamas of the different monasteries receive their rations; and that the monks study all the religious books and preach the religion, and that they do not neglect the subject of disputation; and above all, you should see that all the monastic rules are duly observed. Finally, you should discharge your duties faithfully and treat the poor subjects and monks with all consideration and help them in every way possible. You should keep careful accounts of all receipts and expenditure from land revenue, etc., and apply the balance for the observance of religious ceremonies. You should carry on your duties appertaining to the spiritual and temporal powers after due consultation; but if you cannot decide any big question, you should refer the matter to me for orders. You should discharge the duties of your responsible position without fail and leave nothing undone. I hereby command all the monks and laymen, who are subjects of the Tashi-Lhunpo Government, to obey the orders of the Acting Prime Minister and Council and discharge their duties faithfully. Let all noblemen and peasants bear these instructions

in mind and act accordingly. I will issue necessary orders in the future according to circumstances. Let all the animate beings bear this in mind. I have issued these orders on the auspicious date – the 18th day of the 11th month of the Water-Pig Year [26 December 1923].⁵⁷

The Tibetan government sent troops under the command of Lungshar and Tshögaw to stop him, but they were too late and the Panchen Lama escaped with a large entourage.

The Dalai Lama responded by appointing his own administrator, the Dzasa Lama, to take over the administration of Tashilhunpo:

This is addressed to all men who enjoy the dual blessings of true religion and good government and especially to the great incarnate Lama Si-thei-thu Lhopa and to all the Officials of the Tashi-Lhunpo Monastery and the heads of the four Colleges, the Jongpens of Lhatse, Ngam-ring, Phuntsoling and Kampajong, and to all the high and low monks and laymen: –

Recently, I received the following report from the two Jongpens [*dzongpön*] who are acting as my representatives at Shigatse: – “Before the Tashi Lama left Shigatse for some unknown destination, he left written instructions as to how the administration was to be carried on during his absence; these are briefly as follows:

“With regard to the complaints of the Tashi-Lhunpo Government great kindness has been shown to me by His Holiness the Dalai Lama, but the investigating officers have not done justice. They have ordered the subjects of the Tashi-Lhunpo Government to supply free transport, etc. Moreover, I am unable to undertake the responsibility of obtaining the supplies and money required to meet the military expenditure. I am therefore leaving Tashi-Lhunpo for a short period for an unknown destination to seek assistance from the dispenser of gifts in Kham and Mongolia and raise funds from all Buddhists.”

As regards the free supplies and transport asked for from the subjects of the Tashi-Lhunpo Government, they have agreed to supply the same and the demands are in accordance with the existing agreements. I have therefore issued orders that these should be complied with and there is no cause for complaint. The investigating officers have not shown any favour to any party by receiving gifts; and I have letters to prove that this action will not do any harm to the Tashi Lama or myself especially as we are both on most friendly terms. In connection with the payment of one fourth of the total military expenditure in Tibet, it may be mentioned that it is in accordance with former custom, but as the Prime Minister did not make the payment for a number of years, the amount accumulated and could not be paid at once. The result was that it caused trouble in their eyes when they rubbed them with their own hands. I have not once used any force to exact the payment. On the other hand, out of compassion, I agreed that the payment should be spread over several years and reduced the amount as much as I could. This fact is known to all the wise men. This time, the Tashi Lama has gone secretly on the pretext that the two things mentioned above caused him trouble and listened to the advice of evil persons. I have sent the Chief Accountant, Lungshar, to

persuade him to return to Shigatse with the following message: – “Having heard of your secret departure I have been deeply grieved at the news because our relations had been friendly and I was your teacher. Remembering the fact that you and I were born as a father and son (i.e., teacher and disciple), it is not right for me to treat you just as I pleased; but there is a custom prevailing among the high class people that the elder should advise the younger. You did not consult me in the matter and I do not know the real reasons for your departure and what the end will be. I myself had to visit China, Mongolia and India, owing to the British and Chinese troops having come to the Tibetan Capital, in order to save the spiritual and temporal powers. I suffered great hardships to secure happiness and to safeguard our religion. By adopting wise means, it is known to all that the Buddhist religion is spreading and that the temporal powers of Tibet are in our hand and that we are enjoying peace and prosperity. But you must have been misled by your followers who had previously caused mischief. As sins cannot be washed away by water and mental sorrow cannot be removed by the hands, why are you disappointed? Moreover, since I have assumed both the spiritual and temporal powers, I have treated all the subjects and officials of the Tashi-Lhunpo Government with the greatest consideration, rewarding those who observed the laws of religion and the customs of the country in greater matters and it is lawful to punish a few evil-doers. With regard to trifling matters, I have taken no steps and left everything in peace. These cannot be described here in detail. I request you to think over the conversation we had at our previous meeting; and if you read the correspondence that has passed between us, you will understand everything. You have written to me frequently saying that there is no other protector to whom you can go for assistance and protection. In view of the correspondence and the conversation we had at our meeting, it is not understood why you departed secretly unless you have found yourself at fault. By going to Mongolia, great dangers will beset you. At the time I visited China and Mongolia, it was peaceful everywhere, but the political situation is quite different now and this fact is well-known to you. It is not understood why you have left your monastery in which you should now be sitting in meditation. You seem to have forgotten the sacred history of your predecessors and wandered away to a desert where there are no people – like a butterfly that is attracted by the lamp-light, – and thus bringing trouble to yourself. Such conduct does not do credit to your predecessors and if you had only taken the trouble to consult your teacher “Lhopa”, he would have given you sound advice. But you did not consult him and ran away with your sinful companions who resemble elephants and followed the wrong path. Although you are a holy person, if the fruits of your deed ripen, there is no doubt that you will suffer great hardships. As I feel the separation from you, I despatched Tsipon Lungshar to persuade you and your followers to return to your monastery for the sake of the Buddhist religion and the good government of the country and chiefly for your happiness and prosperity, at a time when religion has reached a stage like a lamp in which all the oil has become nearly consumed. It is mentioned in many religious books that you and I and all the holy persons should strive to work for the benefit of all living beings.

It is difficult to believe that a person who thinks of himself only and who is not freed from the three sins, (i.e., anger, pride, and ignorance) should be regarded as a Lama or Buddha. As selfishness is a great evil in this world, the wisest course to adopt is to repent and turn back from the wrong path. What I have said above is perfectly true. You have written to me on many occasions asking me to appoint a Dzasa Lama (Prime Minister) at Tashi-Lhunpo and I could have done so; but as you enjoyed both the spiritual and temporal powers, I agreed to your proposal to carry on the administration with the assistance of four Ministers appointed by you. But as you and your ministers have left Shigatse and gone to a foreign country, the Tibetan Government will appoint a Dzasa Lama and send him to Tashi-Lhunpo without delay to manage the internal and external affairs for the benefit of all the subjects. This notice is issued to all the monks and subjects in order that they may understand everything that has taken place and act accordingly without making any mistake to attain happiness in this life as well as in the next." Dated the 20th day of the 12th month of the Water-Pig year [26 January 1924].

Seal of Dalai Lama⁵⁸

In July 1924 the Panchen Lama sent an answer from China, reiterating what he had said in the letter cited above.

Although it is impossible . . . for your Holiness to entertain any ill intentions toward me, being teacher and pupil, yet as I had written to Your Holiness many times before, some of the ignorant and mischievous officials of Your Holiness who have an axe to grind have been creating estrangement and inconvenience between us. . . . Owing to many regulations contrary to the laws and usage set forth by the previous Dalai Lamas, Tashi Lhunpo and the lesser monasteries which are under my jurisdiction have greatly suffered and the few poor peasants working on the lands belonging to these monasteries have become destitute owing to the new taxes and unprecedented call for free labor. Again to pay the enormous tax known as the quarter of the army expenditure with no land as a means from which the money could be obtained and which none of the other subjects had to pay, caused us great anxiety. Moreover my poor and unsophisticated servants had to endure great hardship and cruelty so that there was no peace of mind either regards externally or internally and [they] suffered great indignity. Although I tried many times to obtain a personal interview so as to lay before Your Holiness the real state of affairs as it is in my mind and obtain Your Holiness's true advice as to what is the best thing to be done to help towards paying this new army expenditure tax. This again the above mentioned ill minded officials of Your Holiness with the purpose of frustrating amicable settlement concocted many difficulties in the way and Your Holiness informed me that even to have just a personal interview would place both the teacher and the pupil in an awkward position. Therefore not knowing what to do, leaving a note to your Holiness asking for permission to be transmitted by the Shigatse-Chizong, I set forth and I did not ask for permission beforehand as it might again make things awkward and this is the real reason and please do not be offended

with me. . . . Dispatched from Langchowfu on 13th of 5th month of the Wood-Mouse Year [July 1924].⁵⁹

In reply the Dalai Lama wrote:

I am writing this privately, without standing on any ceremony.

Recently, on the 6th intercalary day of the 4th month of the Fire-Tiger Year (which corresponds to the 17/18 May 1926) I received your kind letter along with its accompaniment . . . through Jampa Thog me.

You say, and I think so too, that some evil-minded subordinate, who did not wish that the teacher and pupil . . . should remain on good terms, must have reported against and caused trouble for Labrang, that it was not convenient for you to come and lay your grievances before me in person, to clear my mind and take my advice. . . . In order to make permanent the secular and religious rule of Tibet, it was found expedient to assess and collect extra taxes. This measure has affected all the land-lords, the Government and the monasteries – a fact which is well known to you – and it was not especially adopted in order to put the Labrang into trouble. It is no new thing for a Government to call for reports from its subordinates with regard to new taxation. These reports the subordinates base on their experience. If anyone has said anything untoward between the teacher . . . and the pupil . . . I would not have taken notice of it. Whatever cause for complaint the Labrang might have, we could have gone into it at our leisure. But, instead you have left suddenly without any reason. It is not possible that you . . . could have become disloyal to me. In all probability you have been swayed by the reports of one or two servants, who do not understand things. I view your long stay on that side with pessimism, as I do not know what will happen to you. Here I am offering prayers to the precious trinity and am performing other holy ceremonies on a big scale for your well-being. Therefore, taking into consideration the secular and religious interests of Tibet, and more particularly of the monks of the Tashi Lhunpo monastery, it would be a good thing if you would come back immediately. If you would kindly do this, I would render all necessary help. I am issuing strict orders to Dzasa Lama Lobzang Tenzing and his assistants to see that the Tashi Lhunpo monastery and its branch monasteries are not put to any inconvenience. . . . Dispatched on the 2nd day of the 5th month of the Iron-Tiger Year (which corresponds to the 12th June 1926).⁶⁰

The 9th Panchen Lama did not respond to this letter, but remained in China. (His subsequent attempts to return to Tibet are discussed in Chapter Eight.) Although couched in the idiom of personal misunderstandings, these letters clearly show that the fundamental issue was the extent of the authority of the central government. However, to large segments of the more orthodox Gelugpa population, the forced flight of the Panchen Lama was seen as but another of the disagreeable consequences of secular changes in Tibet and the rise to prominence of the Western-oriented military faction. This is illustrated by two street songs in Lhasa applauding the Panchen Lama's successful flight into exile.

The Panchen, saying he is a vulture,
has gone in great leaps and bounds.
Tshögaw, saying he is a hunting hound,
has returned sniffing the ground.

Our Lama is a God,
[our] Lama's horse is a bird.
Having put a golden saddle on the bird,
he has flown off into the sky.⁶¹

During the three years following the Loseling *tshaja* incident, new regiments were raised, and Bell convinced the British government to sell the Tibetans 10 mountain guns, 20 Lewis guns, and 10,000 rifles with ammunition.⁶² Moreover, 4 officers and over 300 noncommissioned officers received military training in Gyantse between 1922 and 1925;⁶³ 4 officers and 20 noncommissioned officers received training in the use of mountain guns in Quetta in India; and others were trained as armorers, and in gunnery, infantry, and cavalry work.

The British provided technical assistance in building a telegraph line between Lhasa and Gyantse, and some Tibetan youths were trained as telegraphers. Machinery for a 40,000-rupee hydroelectric plant was purchased from England, and work on the plant began. A survey for mineral wealth was conducted in Tibet by an Englishman, and an English school under the direction of a Mr. F. Ludlow was started in Gyantse in 1924 with several dozen aristocrats' sons in attendance. And Ladenla, a Sikkimese police officer from Darjeeling, was hired to establish a modern police force in Lhasa.

Other plans were also considered. Tsarong wanted Tibet to join the International Postal Union, to produce a Tibetan typewriter in India, and to develop motor car and motorboat transportation in Tibet.⁶⁴ Others were also eager to modernize; for example, Commander Surkhang organized polo matches and constructed a tennis court in Lhasa. Several other army commanders, including Tshögaw, cut their hair short in the British style. These were heady times for the pro-modern, pro-Western faction. It looked as though Tibet was going to be able to develop the political, economic, and military infrastructure of a reasonably modern state.

Throughout these years, the Drönyerchemmo Ara Gaapo had harassed the military clique and attempted unsuccessfully to erode the Dalai Lama's confidence in Tsarong. In 1924 an incident occurred that again reversed the direction of Tibet's political development, resulting in the demotion of almost all the army commanders, including Tsarong, and ending the incipient program of modernization in Tibet.

The creation of a modern police force for Lhasa in 1922–1923 generated resentment among the army soldiers, who held that the police did less work but received almost twice the salary and got better uniforms. In early May 1924, a fight between some soldiers and policemen ended with the fatal stabbing of a policeman. Ladenla, the head of the police,⁶⁵ was notified of the fight while he was attending an all-day party with Tsarong and a number of other military commanders. The report he received warned that a bigger conflict might erupt, since the soldiers were returning to the arsenal at Trapchi to get ammunition.⁶⁶

Ladenla, like everyone else at the party, was slightly intoxicated when the news arrived. He angrily informed Tsarong of the incident, publicly suggesting that as

commander-in-chief of the army, Tsarong had every right to punish the guilty soldiers by hanging them or even by tying them to the front of a cannon and blowing them up. He also warned that continued conflicts could seriously damage the military's future.⁶⁷ Tsarong too was enraged at his troops; this was just the kind of bad publicity that his enemies would use against him. He decided, therefore, to make an example of the guilty soldiers that would serve as a potent deterrent.

All the military officers at once went to the scene of the disturbance, where Tsarong punished the guilty soldiers on the spot: the soldier who killed the policeman had one of his legs amputated above the knee, and the soldier who helped him had his right ear cut off.⁶⁸ The former died and his head and limb were publicly displayed on the left and right of the entrance to the Thromsikang Lhasa marketplace beside the Barkor and Jokhang Temple.

These events gave the Drönyerchemmo a new opportunity to attack Tsarong and the military. Pointing to the military's failure to contact the government regarding either the crime or the punishment, he told the Dalai Lama: "Do they see themselves as above the government or independent of it? You banned amputations as a form of punishment but they still do whatever they want. There should have been arrests and then investigations by the appropriate government agencies. Where will all this end?"⁶⁹ Angered by Tsarong's defiance of his orders, the Dalai Lama instructed the Drönyerchemmo to investigate the incident thoroughly. The Drönyerchemmo therefore ordered Tsarong to report to him and explain his actions.

Fearing that the Drönyerchemmo would present any explanation in the worst possible light, and feeling also that it was unsuitable to be questioned on a military matter by a lower-ranking monk official, Tsarong refused to cooperate with the Drönyerchemmo. His recalcitrance only increased the persuasiveness of the Drönyerchemmo's arguments that the military clique was setting itself up as a law unto itself.

The military faction's next moves were catastrophic. Several versions of them are available. One account, derived from Ladenla's reports to the political officer in Sikkim, says that the military commanders, fearing Tsarong would be demoted, acted on the suggestion of Commander Surkhang that they join with the police officers in sending a petition to the Dalai Lama to excuse Tsarong.⁷⁰

The leading officers met secretly to sign the petition jointly. Being somewhat distrustful of each other, however, and knowing that the Dalai Lama might interpret the petition as a veiled threat from the army, they took an oath that none of them would say later that the petition was the work of just one or two men. This secret meeting took place in Ladenla's house, because he, as an Indian subject, was immune from retribution. Ladenla later claimed he acted only as a neutral witness to all these events, but this is very unlikely.⁷¹ The petition stated:

On the (blank) of the (blank) month of the Wood-Mouse Year – there was a dispute between the police and soldiers of the "Ta" Regiment. The Commander-in-Chief, in the presence of the majority of the military and police officers – in order to avoid further trouble-punished one soldier of the "Ta" regiment by having his leg amputated, and another by cutting off his ear.

The Commander-in-Chief found that the officers of the "Ta" Regiment failed to take sufficient interest in their duties – and thus caused the firing. Therefore he called on some of them in writing to explain – but he could not

complete taking their explanations that night as there was no time. While he was enquiring into the matter, on the 2nd day of the 3rd intercalary month [5 May 1924] His Holiness the Dalai Lama sent Dronyer Chemmo to Tsarong Shape, Commander-in-Chief, calling upon him to submit his explanation [for the punishments]. The under-signed officers having discussed the submission of this explanation have decided to submit the enclosed combined memorial to His Holiness the Dalai Lama begging him to pardon him [Tsarong] and to excuse him from submitting the explanation called for. We therefore sign our names consecutively:

Trompa Dzasa, Assistant Commander-in-Chief	Rupon Tsogo, Military Officer
Khensam (Mondo), Police Officer	Samse (Detsab)
Surse Wangte (Depon Surkhang), Military Officer	Dose (Ragashar), Police Officer
Khyungram (Depon), Military Officer	Lhase (Lhadingse), Police Officer
Salung Tsetop (Depon) Military Officer	Kyipub (youngest Kyipub) Chotran Khen tsural, Police Officer ⁷²

They took this petition to Tsarong the next day and, after some discussion, decided to take it to the Lönchen Sholkang and ask his opinion before sending it to the Dalai Lama.

Sholkang had already met with the Drönyerchemmo and had little sympathy with Tsarong's arguments. There are two versions of his response. According to Ladenla, he advised against submitting the petition and asked Tsarong to submit an explanation to the Drönyerchemmo. In this account, the officers and Tsarong agreed with this response.⁷³

Another, fuller version of these events comes from Tshögaw, one of the army commanders, as told to Norbhu Döndu, the ethnic Tibetan Indian government official then in Lhasa:

So all of them left the Host house and on their arrival at Mr. Laden La's house (Yamen) Tsarong shouted and ceased all firing and on enquiry he got hold of the two guilty soldiers who stabbed the police. Tsarong was then so excited that he made one soldier cut his ears and the other a leg but the latter succumbed to death by the injury after few hours. Tsarong Shappe was begged by all officers to excuse the guilty persons from cutting ears and leg but he turned his deaf ears. After that happening they all dispersed and returned to their respective houses, then in the evening of the same day rumours afloat that Tsarong Shappe will be put into trouble and will be killed by taking such independent action of murder. On the following morning while Tsoko [Tshögaw] was in bed Tsarong sent for him, he got up and went there say

about 7AM and saw Sampose coming out from Tsarong's place and little later Khyungram Depon [commander] was also coming out there were about 2 or 3 minutes intervals between Sampose and Khyungram. Tsoko then went in and he was ordered by Tsarong that all officers are holding a meeting today in Mr. Laden La's house and that he must attend to this meeting, no sooner Tsarong ordered this to Tsoko, the latter took leave and promised to go to Mr. Laden La's place. When Tsoko came out he found Surkhang Depon was waiting outside the house so Surkhang went in and Tsoko returned. At about 10 o'clock Mr. Laden La sent twice for Tsoko. He went there and they hold meeting and drawn up an agreement to combine into one in making a representation on behalf of Tsarong Shappe to Dalai Lama stating that there are many Tibetan soldiers and unless the Tsarong Shappe has full power to punish any wicked soldier it is difficult to control them so they should represent such to the Dalai Lama and putting many other things in favour of military which Tsoko do not recalled now all details. While this agreement were drawing Major Pedma Chandra (who came from Calcutta University) asked Tsoko quietly to come to latrine they both went and Major Pedma Chandra said to Tsoko that he should select all his trusted soldiers and select from other regiments and then take Tsarong Shappe to Shigatse to fight against the Tibetan Government and that Pedma Chandra himself will select his own men (artillery) and prepare accordingly to fight against the Tibetan Govt.⁷⁴ On this Tsoko got wild and threatened the Pedma Chandra not to say so or else he shall report the matter, however, Pedma Chandra insisted and requested Tsoko but the latter did not agree to his secret conversation and after that they came in the house (Yamen) and signed. The agreement was signed by Trumba Dsasa, Mr. Laden La, Mondrong, Surkhang, Khyungram, Lhedingse, Ragashar, Tsoko, Nyelungwa, Magtrung Tamding, Sampose, Pedma Chandra and Phagdong Latsenpa. After signing the agreement in which they all agreed to represent matters to the Dalai Lama, these officers went to Tsarong Shappe's house and requested Tsarong to explain things to the Dalai Lama personally or in writing. Tsarong refused this flatly and said I am the Commander in Chief of the Tibetan Army and *I must have certain power, the Commander in Chief of British Army has every right in dealing such cases and why he should not follow same rule since the Tibetan have introduced British drill instructions and desire to follow their (British) rules and Regulations*. All officers could not make Tsarong listen to reason. Little later Khyungram called all officers outside and taken to another room where Tsarong Shappe's altar is and images of God and we should all take oath and should do what I say and asked Trumba Dzasa first. Trumba Dzasa took oath that he shall do everything to help his brethren officers and shall listen to everything, provided that it is nothing against the Dalai Lama [his uncle], no sooner Trumba had said this and took oath everyone said that I shall do the same, I shall do the same. I shall do the same, when such things happened some of them suddenly said that since Tsarong Shappe would not listen to us, let us go to Lonchen Sholkang, they all agreed and went to Lonchen's house to seek advice and shown to Lonchen a draft representation with which all the officers wanted to go before the Dalai Lama. No sooner

Lonchen read the representation, he returned the document to the officers and told them not to offer such long representations and not to go any one before the Dalai Lama, if you do so Dalai Lama will get annoyed and shall punish you all and since you came to me for my advice I suggest the best to help, this is what Lonchen said to them then the officers have returned and all the junior officers have said since they do not have to go to the Dalai Lama with the representation, they see no reason why everyone should go to Lonchen next day and it is advisable that 2 senior officers is quite sufficient to represent again before Lonchen and they named Trumpa Dzasa and Mr. Laden La as they are the two senior among the lot. This is all what Tsoko told me privately on my pressure to him I promised not to tell a word to any Tibetans but to you only . . . he says he took oath not to tell anyone but to the Dalai Lama only if the things really comes out. . . . Further he tells me that there are 2 or 3 parties among the officers . . . [and that] they also wanted to murder the late Dronyer Chemo. Tsoko says that no sooner Tsoko refused to fight against Tibetan Govt., Mr. Laden La, Surkhangse, Khyungram and Pedma Chandra combined into one most secret society and in this Tsarong is also included. Another part Mondrong, Sampose, Lhedingse, and Phagdong letsenpa, etc. Tsarong deals with everyone equally outwardly but his main mover are the four mentioned above . . . but about the revolution it may come out any moment and Tsarong Shappe is in the hot fire and everyone suspect very much of him and thinks that British Govt. may help him if he is put into trouble, this is bazaar rumour. It is also said that Tsarong Shappe told out that he has asked Barbar Shamsheer of Nepal to help him if Tsarong writes to him. . . . I am feeling that His Holiness must be thinking we are behind Tsarong Shappe or any other Tibetan military officers.⁷⁵

[In a note to another letter to Bailey, Norbhu Döndup added:] Please add Youngest Kyipup's name also. The Pedma Chandra suggested to murder Dronyer Chemo first and then take Tsarong to Shigatse with Tsoko's selected men to fight against Tibetan Government.⁷⁶

Norbhu Döndup adds that the "Dalai Lama sent words through his favorite that he does not like to discuss matter with me about Mr Laden La while in Tibet and says that many things happen, some have proof and some have no proof."⁷⁷ Moreover, in a later meeting the Dalai Lama told Norbhu that there were all sorts of wild rumours, but that, since these were difficult to prove, it was best to leave matters as they were.⁷⁸

By Tshögaw's account, Tsarong and Ladenla orchestrated the appeal in the form of a long statement about the need for the military to have authority over its own troops. The lönchen advised against this and against going to the Dalai Lama in person. Thus, the copy of the petition that Ladenla sent to his British superior was apparently an abbreviated second version. Tshögaw's account also reveals that although the officers took a sacred oath to support each other, there was no consensus regarding the use of force as a last resort. It seems clear, however, that some officers discussed taking military action as well as assassinating the Drönyerchemmo. Sambo (Rimshi) recalls his father's (Sambo Teiji's) account of a conversation he had with Tshögaw verifying this. Tshögaw said:

We wanted to get rid of the Drönyerchemo Ara gaapo so we had no other way but to kill him. . . . So we had a meeting and I was given the responsibility of killing him. So one morning I went to Norbulinga and walked straight into his house ignoring the normal courtesy of waiting outside. I walked straight into his room. The room was dark and was something black in the back which I thought was he. I put my hand in my pocket where I was carrying a pistol and just before I was going to shoot him, I realized that there was no man there but only an old cloak which was sitting up straight. So I walked out of the room and asked the servant where the Drönyerchemmo was. The servant replied that he had gone to the Dalai Lama's room, so I thought that probably someone had leaked out our plan and I immediately went to the southern gate of Norbulinga and asked the guards who had come that morning. They said that Salunga [another military officer] came early, just before sunrise. So I thought I should kill Salunga instead of Ara gaapo but all my other colleagues insisted I don't do that. So I left him alone.⁷⁹

The heady but tense atmosphere of the times can be seen in a casual discussion between Major F. M. Bailey, the British political officer in Sikkim, and Tsarong about what would ensue when the Dalai Lama died:

[Bailey] asked him what would happen at the Dalai Lama's death. He said that there . . . would surely be trouble and he hoped that the military party would be strong enough to keep down any trouble. If they failed he would fly to India and ask the Government of India to give him work, preferably military work. What would save trouble would be if we [the British] would send up a representative and if necessary some troops on the death of the Dalai Lama. . . . I [Bailey] said I thought that the question would be decided on the first day or two as to whether the monks or the military party was going to control Tibet and that the people would join the victorious side.⁸⁰

The Dalai Lama himself passed on a version of these events to the British through Khencung, the monk official who was the Tibetan trade agent in Gyantse. Khencung first told the story to Norbhu Döndup, who in turn told F. W. Williamson, the British trade agent in Gyantse. Williamson thought the information was so important that he invited Khencung to his residence so that he could hear the story firsthand. It is obvious that this was the Dalai Lama's attempt to provide the British with some coherent explanation of why everything they thought he was accomplishing had suddenly fallen apart; it also provides confirmation (and elaboration) that some of the military officers had discussed a plot against the government. Williamson's report of this discussion said:

Khencung said that the Dalai Lama called him to Norbulinga specially and told him that the real reason for the degradations of the military officers was that most of the military officers had combined together in a plot to deprive His Holiness of his temporal power and to leave only religious affairs in his hands. The Khencung said he then told His Holiness that such an offense was punishable by the offender being thrown into a river in a sack to drown, on

which the Dalai Lama remarked that he didn't wish to be so severe, especially since, if he disclosed the real reason he would have to punish Tsarong equally and wished to be lenient to him in view of his past services.

The Dalai Lama's story was that he had received a good many complaints from the National Assembly and the clerical party of high-handedness and extortion on the part of the military officers. His Holiness directed the Drönyerchemo to obtain the explanations of Tsarong Shape and various other officers. No explanations were furnished and when the Drönyerchemo became insistent, a meeting of military officers was called in a small room above the Jokhang. It is not clear how many people were present at the meeting. Tsarong Shape was present but he appeared diffident about addressing the meeting, and a speech was therefore made by Sardar Bahadur Laden la, in which he appealed to the officers to stick together and to support Tsarong Shape. He said that if the military officers combined, no one could resist them, and asked them all to take an oath to the effect that they would support one another and Tsarong Shape.

A number of officials were in agreement but others including Thrumba said they were prepared to agree and support one another so long as there was no movement against religion or the Dalai Lama. It seems that no agreement was reached and the meeting dispersed without a definite result. It is not clear when this meeting was held but it would seem to have been in early 1924. . . .

Tsarong Shape left for India in September 1924 and shortly before his departure, an agreement was drawn up by Tsarong and Ladenla and other officers to deprive the Dalai Lama of his temporal power and only leave religious jurisdiction in his hands. It is a Tibetan custom to draw up and sign agreements of this kind when any persons combine together for any purpose. It is not clear whether the agreement provided or not that the temporal powers should be in the hands of Tsarong Shape, but this would appear to have been the intention. The agreement was signed by Tsarong and a number of others. Some, however, refused to sign, and the matter was reported to the Dalai Lama.

By some means the actual agreement had come into the Dalai Lama's hands. Khencung said His Holiness definitely said he had the agreement although Khencung didn't see it himself. Shortly afterwards, the plot having been abandoned, Tsarong Shape asked leave to go to India. The Dalai Lama told Khencung he was happy for him to go since it would get him out of the way while he thought the matter over. So far it does not seem that the officers suspected that the Dalai Lama knew anything of the affair.

During Tsarong's absence the Dalai Lama decided to demote the officers and found various pretexts for doing so. He told Khencung he found various suitable pretexts for everyone except for Surkhang and eventually degraded him for intrigue with a woman. . . . The Khencung told me that everything . . . was told him directly by the Dalai Lama in a most secret manner.⁸¹

It is difficult to believe that the Dalai Lama would have been so lenient if he had really had proof of a plot. His account indicates, however, how far his thinking had

altered since the time when Tsarong was his trusted favorite and the military his pet project.

The Dalai Lama's hesitancy in taking action appears to derive from four considerations: (1) there was no firm evidence of a plot; (2) he was unsure how various military officers would react if he attempted to arrest and severely punish some of them; (3) he did not want to harm his old friend Tsarong, as would have been necessary had trials been held for the other officers on charges of treason; and (4) after September 1924, Tsarong was in India and the Dalai Lama could not have known what he (and the British) would do if he arrested the other officers for treason. It is apparent that the Dalai Lama suspected British involvement in the military party's audacity. Ladenla was an Indian official, and it would have been unreasonable to assume he acted without orders or at least official encouragement.⁸² The suspicions of the Dalai Lama were strengthened when Ladenla was promoted by the British after he left Tibet in the autumn of 1925. The Dalai Lama felt so strongly about this that he wrote the following letter to Norbhu Döndup:

A special letter. I hear that Dzasa Depon Laden La is being appointed the British Trade Agent at Yatung, vice Mr. MacDonald retiring. I do not know whether this is a fact. Of course, Laden La is a Sikkimese, who has faith in the Buddhist religion. He has been here for about a year, organizing the police and it has been found out that he is not altogether a steady and straightforward man and it is not known how he would serve to maintain the Anglo-Tibetan amity. Please therefore arrange by representing the matter to the Lonchen (P.O.S.) [political officer in Sikkim], to appoint a British Officer.⁸³

The Dalai Lama knew, however, that he could count on factions among the military officers to prevent the army officers from initiating military action without some strong provocation. Thus he decided, as he had done earlier about the monasteries, that the best course of action was to wait.

Six months later, in January 1925, another incident involving the police brought the conflict back into the spotlight. Two Lhasa policemen came face to face with two monks on a narrow road near Lhasa. They started abusing each other for not yielding the road, and the police arrested the monks despite an attempt to mediate by the head lama of Muru monastery (near Lhasa), who happened to arrive at this juncture. The policemen took the monks to their officer, Kisur (an aristocrat), who released the monks at the request of Muru Lama. At this time the police force was headed by Möndrong and a Lhasa magistrate who was not a police or military officer.

The Muru Lama complained to the Lhasa magistrate, so the latter sent for Kisur and the two offending policemen. The magistrate wanted Kisur to have the two policemen whipped, but Kisur refused, arguing that they had done nothing wrong. The magistrate then began to beat them himself. By this time a large group of police officers had gathered outside his office and raised a great uproar. Believing that they were threatening him, the Lhasa magistrate quietly left but reported the matter to the Drönyerchemmo the next day. The Dalai Lama then ordered the arrest of Kisur and another junior police officer, and again asked the Drönyerchemmo to investigate the affair.⁸⁴

In the end, Kisur was dismissed from the government. He was forced to walk through the streets of Lhasa barefoot with his hair down, and he was imprisoned for life in distant Kongpo. Möndrong was also demoted from Khencung to a low rank and was posted to one of the most remote areas, near the Ladakh border.⁸⁵

Although the Dalai Lama realized the importance of the military both for national defense and for control of the unruly monks, he had thought a strong and professional military, under the control of his trusted favorite Tsarong, would be completely subordinate to the government. He now found this to be unrealistic. Goaded on by the Drönyerchemmo, he chose in the end to weaken the military rather than risk their deposing him.

The Dalai Lama now decided to defuse the threat indirectly by demoting military officers one after another, for unrelated and often trivial reasons. Commanders Dingja and Sambo and Rupön Tshögaw were demoted to the fifth rank and relieved of their commands for cutting their hair in the British fashion. Surkhang was demoted for an extra-marital alliance. Doring, Kyibu, and Pedma Chandra were also demoted for trivial reasons.⁸⁶ Pedma Chandra fled on horseback shortly after the dismissal of the officers and was killed when a pursuit party overtook him. His head was brought back and exhibited in Lhasa with a notice saying that he had embezzled money and had spoken against the Dalai Lama.⁸⁷

Meanwhile, news reached Lhasa that Tsarong was back from India and had reached Gyantse on or about 1 April 1925. The Dalai Lama sent a special messenger to meet him at Chushul (two days' journey from Lhasa) with an order relieving him of his position as commander-in-chief. Rinchen Dolma Taring, then married to Tsarong, remembers reading the order, which avoided the real reason but simply said: "By order of His Holiness the Dalai Lama we have decided that the second-in-command, Dzasa Trumba, can carry on the work of the Army headquarters as there is no anxiety in the country at the moment, so we need not [have] a Commander-in-Chief."⁸⁸

Although many members of the monastic faction advised the Dalai Lama also to expel Tsarong from the Kashag and to confiscate his property,⁸⁹ the Dalai Lama could not bring himself to do this. He allowed Tsarong to continue as a shape, although Tsarong never really regained his political power and was finally demoted from shape in 1930.

Thrumba, who was made junior commander-in-chief just before Tsarong left for India in 1924, then took over but, as Norbhu Döndup reported to Bailey, Thrumba was only authorized to supervise the troops and barracks and to keep the troops properly disciplined. In other words, he was not to be permitted to develop military policy and could call out the troops only with permission. The shapes were to control the decision making regarding military policy.⁹⁰

The dismissal of Tsarong and the military officers began a period in which the military deteriorated badly. Norbhu Döndup visited Lhasa again in 1927 and poignantly described this decline:

[The] Military are drilling daily but their uniforms are practically all torn, many of them have got one boot on one foot and the other is naked and they always beg me whenever I passed Norbulinga and Chenselinga. The police are about 100 in number and they are more worse than the military. I find

everyone either in the police or military desire to run away from here if they can manage to do so.⁹¹

It also terminated Tibet's attempts to modernize and encouraged the Dalai Lama's autocracy and dependence on favorites. Norbhu Döndup reported during his Lhasa visit in 1927 that the Dalai Lama had no faith in the Kashag and little in the lönchen and that he did everything without consulting the appropriate government officers. Norbhu Döndup also said that everyone was very afraid of the Dalai Lama.⁹²

Norbhu Döndup urged Bailey to persuade the British government to try to reverse the anti-British, anti-modernization attitudes of the Tibetan government, but London categorically refused. The political officer made this clear in a letter to Norbhu Döndup:

You should not ask for reinstatement of any officers – you should find out the Dalai Lama's attitude toward the events and ask him if we can help in any way. He may himself suggest reinstatement but the F.O. [Foreign Office] think it is too much interference to suggest it (there are only 2 ways of pulling the army together again – either reinstate the officers already trained – or train fresh officers).⁹³

The Dalai Lama for his part, did not suggest reinstatement and did not take up Norbhu Döndup's offer to help in any way, as by training fresh officers.

Although Tibet was able to maintain its de facto independence during the two decades following the Dalai Lama's triumphant return to Lhasa in 1913, these decades were filled with intermittent military conflict on the Kham/Chinese border. The Simla Convention of 1913–1914 did not produce the secure political status the Tibetan government had expected, since the Chinese had refused to sign it, although Tibet did gain in that Britain and India negotiated and signed agreements with Tibet independent of China. In retrospect, however, this proved small consolation for the insecurity of facing a gigantic neighbor who threatened at any time to launch a new military attack. Compounding this danger was the Dalai Lama's decision to weaken the military and to retreat from the program of modernization.

Notes

[Editor's note: the author provides a list of "Correct Tibetan Spellings" on pp. 855–82 of his work.]

- 1 A commander (depön) headed a battalion consisting of roughly 500 soldiers.
- 2 Some years later, Tsarong once invited the abbots of the Three Seats to his house. In the course of the party, he showed them his chapel room. They expressed amazement that he had so many statues and religious texts since they had believed he was basically irreligious (Tsarong [Rimshi], interview). Surkhang Depön exemplified the radical officers' view in his treatise setting out the structure for a new Tibet under a republican form of government. This work was destroyed by his son after the fall of Lungshar in 1934; he feared that if the manuscript were found in their house the family would be accused of trying to overthrow the government and would lose their estates and position (Chunden Drogar, interview, based on comments by her uncle, the late Surkhang Shape).
- 3 In Tibetan: *gsol ja mngar mo bzhes mkhan / gzims shag med pa'i bzo red / dbu zhwa tshe ring dkyil 'khor / dbu 'phrugs med pa'i rtags red.*

- 4 In Tibetan: *dkar po dmar po byug mkhan / rnam pa med pa'i tags red / bzhes pag kog khun bzhes mkhan / gsol zhib med pa'i rtags red.*
- 5 Bell 1946: 249.
- 6 IOR, Mss.Eur. F. 80/5a/42, letter from D. MacDonald (Gyantse trade agent, then in Lhasa) to Bell (en route), dated 4 January 1921, quoting Chamön Depa of Sera monastery.
- 7 *Ibid.*, quoting Chamön Depa of Sera.
- 8 IOR, Mss.Eur. F. 80/5a/42, letter from D. MacDonald (in Lhasa) to Bell (en route), dated 20 January 1921.
- 9 Bell 1946: 251.
- 10 *Ibid.*: 276.
- 11 *Ibid.*: 277.
- 12 *Ibid.*
- 13 Bell 1946: 283–85. The Butter-Sculpture Festival is named for the huge painted butter figures placed on triangular wooden frames over which leather has been stretched.
- 14 In Tibetan such estates are called *dashi* and *gashi*.
- 15 This account of the military officers' discussions derives primarily from Shan kha ba (Shankawa), ms. He was one of the commanders at this time and a participant in incident.
- 16 *Ibid.*
- 17 Tsipöns normally recommended to the Kashag the names of lay officials to participate in the National Assemblies. In an Abbreviated National Assembly such as this, officials were selected from all government strata (the fourth rank, fifth rank, etc.). There was, however, no tradition of selecting a representative specifically from among the military officers; they simply fell within the fourth-rank officials, and on this occasion, no military officers were selected to represent the fourth rank.
- 18 *Ibid.*
- 19 The seven were commanders Thrumba, Doring, Shankawa, Tshögaw, and Salungpa, Captain Purdon, and Military Secretary Kesang.
- 20 Shan kha ba (Shankawa), ms.; Shakabpa (1967: 264) says, "The young generals, led by Tsarong, interrupted the meeting and demanded military representation." We find Shankawa's version more in keeping with Tibetan norms and therefore more likely. In any case, while they probably did not directly demand representation on the spot, in more general terms that is obviously what they were doing.
- 21 Shan kha ba (Shankawa), ms.
- 22 *Ibid.*
- 23 These leaders were eight trunqtsi officials and the representatives of Ganden, Drepung, and Sera monasteries.
- 24 Shan kha ba (Shankawa), ms.
- 25 *Ibid.*
- 26 Lungshar had lived in England in 1913–1914.
- 27 Shan kha ba (Shankawa), ms.
- 28 The date is cited by Bell (1946: 209); the rest is from Shan kha ba (Shankawa), ms.
- 29 Seynamba is a rank just below that of the fourth rank. It has no portfolio and represented a humiliating demotion for Kusantse.
- 30 Shan kha ba (Shankawa), ms.
- 31 Surkhang, interview. These three are the managers of Tsha khamtsen, Gonggo khamtsen, and Phugang khamtsen, Loseling's three largest khamtsen.
- 32 *Ibid.*
- 33 It is not clear whether they just wanted to give the estate to someone else, as some suggest, or whether they intended to take direct administrative control over all such estates.
- 34 Shan kha ba (Shankawa), ms.
- 35 While on their way there on horseback, they were met by a servant of Deyang Tshenship (the assistant tutor to the Dalai Lama), who told them that they should not go to Lhasa that day as it was not good. The three managers discussed this but decided that since they were so close to Norbulinga, they should go on.
- 36 Surkhang, interview; Shan kha ba (Shankawa), ms.

- 37 Urgyenla, interview; Surkhang, interview; Bell 1946: 90–115. The Tibetan term *trapa lu* (*grwa pa lugs*) expresses this rushing out by the monks to protest and intimidate the government. The verb *lu* normally conveys a substance bursting out of confinement, as water from a hole in a dam.
- 38 Urgyenla, interview; Surkhang, interview; Shan kha ba (Shankawa), ms.
- 39 IOR, L/PS/10/883, telegram from Bell in Lhasa to the Government of India, Delhi, dated 3 August 1921. Tsarong Rimshi (personal communication) contends that there were more than 700 soldiers in Lhasa at this time. He says the Bodyguard Regiment had 500, and that there were two or three other regiments in Lhasa. This may well be correct, but Bell was referring to troops on hand; often a sizable portion of a regiment was on leave. In any case, even 1,200 soldiers was hardly an overwhelming force for a major confrontation.
- 40 *Ibid.*
- 41 Tsarong (Rimshi), personal correspondence.
- 42 IOR, L/PS/10/883, telegram from Bell in Lhasa to the Government of India, dated 3 September 1921, cited in a telegram from the Government of India to His Majesty's Government, dated 11 September 1921.
- 43 Bell 1946: 327.
- 44 Surkhang, interview; Shan kha ba (Shankawa), ms.
- 45 *Ibid.*
- 46 IOR, L/PS/10/883, telegram from Bell in Lhasa to the Government of India, Delhi, dated 16 September 1921, cited in a telegram from the Government of India to His Majesty's Government, dated 23 September 1921.
- 47 Urgyenla, interview.
- 48 Khri byang 1975: 94–95.
- 49 Urgyenla, interview.
- 50 IOR, L/PS/10/883, telegram from Bell in Lhasa to the Government of India, Delhi, dated 16 September 1921, cited in a telegram from the Government of India to His Majesty's Government, dated 23 September 1921.
- 51 The entire Tengyeling monastery had been razed to the ground in 1913.
- 52 Don khang 1984: 2.
- 53 *Ibid.*: 35.
- 54 *Ibid.*: 57.
- 55 IOR, L/PS/12/4174, letter from the British trade agent in Gyantse to the political officer in Sikkim, dated 18 November 1922. The British refused to intervene.
- 56 Phun rab, 1984: 130.
- 57 IOR, L/PS/12/4174 (PZ 1769/24), British trade agent in Gyantse to the political officer in Sikkim, roughly March 1924.
- 58 IOR, L/PS/12/4174 (PZ 1431124), enclosure to letter from the political officer in Sikkim to the Government of India, dated 20 February 1924.
- 59 IOR, L/PS/12/4174 (PZ 6939132), enclosure to letter from the political officer in Sikkim to the Government of India, dated 19 October 1932.
- 60 IOR, L/PS/12/4174 (PZ 6940), cited in letter from the political officer in Sikkim to the Government of India, dated 1 October 1932.
- 61 In Tibetan: *pan chen rgod po yin zer / lam 'phongs gcad nas thad song / mtsho sgog sha khyi yin zer / dri ma snum nas sleb byung. nga tsho'i bla ma lha red / bla ma'i chibs pa bya red / bya la gser sga sgron nas / nam mkha' dbyings brgyud phebs song.*
- 62 After warning the Chinese that unless they resumed negotiations with Tibet within one month Britain would feel free to “give the Tibetans any reasonable assistance they might require in the development of their country,” on 11 October 1921 the Government of India informed the Dalai Lama that “His Majesty's Government . . . will permit the Tibetan Government to import on payment munitions in installments at adequate intervals” provided they were used only for defense. Between 1921 and 1931, apparently three such installments were made, with a fourth in late 1931 (F0 371/20222, p. 225).
- 63 IOR, Mss.Eur. F. 157/214a, Lhasa Diary of Major F. M. Bailey for 22, 30 and 31 July 1924.
- 64 *Ibid.*

- 65 Ladenla held an ambivalent position in Tibet, for though officially a Tibetan government employee, he had been lent to Tibet by the Government of India in August 1923 to develop the police force. Though a Sikkimese (i.e., an ethnic Tibetan), he was very British in outlook and often wore bow ties, riding breeches, and a British hat.
- 66 IOR, Mss.Eur. F. 157/240, letter from Norbhu Döndup to Major F. M. Bailey, political officer in Sikkim, dated 28 and 30 August 1927; Taring 1970: 72.
- 67 IOR, Mss.Eur. F. 157/240, letter from Norbhu Döndup to Major F. M. Bailey, political officer in Sikkim, dated 30 August 1927.
- 68 Tshögaw reported that these punishments were Ladenla's suggestion (*ibid.*). Sambo (Rimshi) (interview) recalls that when he was a boy he heard that Tsarong had said (in verse), "*bcu dpon blo bzang me sgyogs rtse la bskon / de bying dmags me dgu shog brgyab nas bzos.*" (The Jupön (Sergeant) Lobsang should be hanged on the cannon's opening [and blown away]. The rest of the soldiers should be killed in a volley [of shots].)
- 69 Anon 1, interview.
- 70 Surkhang and Tshögaw (and others), however, told Norbhu Döndup in Lhasa that it was Ladenla who was the prime mover.
- 71 IOR, L/PS/10/1088. Ladenla's account is cited in a letter from the political officer in Sikkim to the Government of India, dated 28 May 1927. Ladenla claimed to Bailey that he had not signed the petition.
- 72 IOR, L/PS/10/1088, translation of the petition of Tibetan military commanders (a copy of which had been sent by Ladenla to the political officer) attached to a letter from the political officer in Sikkim to the Government of India, dated 28 May 1927.
- 73 *Ibid.* A variant of this holds that the lönchen told the officers that they should not present the matter to the Dalai Lama themselves but that Tsarong should go personally to the Dalai Lama and explain the situation (IOR, Mss.Eur. F. 157/240, letter from Norbhu Döndup to F. M. Bailey, political officer in Sikkim, dated 28 August 1927).
- 74 Pedma Chandra was a Butanese national who was *rupön* (captain). In 1923, when the group of Tibetan officers and men were sent to Quetta in Assam for training, he was hired as a translator. At the time he was teaching Tibetan at Calcutta University. He trained with the men and returned to Tibet with them. Bailey's recollections add credence to Tshögaw's story, as can be seen by a letter he wrote in 1924: "When I was about to leave Lhasa, the Dalai Lama sent me a secret message to say that he disliked Pedma Chandra, who had been speaking against the Tibetan and British governments, and that he would like to dismiss him but hesitated to do since he was a British subject."
- 75 IOR, Mss.Eur. F. 157/240, letter from Norbhu Döndup to F. M. Bailey, political officer in Sikkim, dated 30 August 1927 (emphasis added).
- 76 IOR, Mss.Eur. F. 157/240, letter from Norbhu Döndup to F. M. Bailey, political officer in Sikkim, dated 1 September 1927.
- 77 *Ibid.*
- 78 IOR, Mss.Eur. F. 157/240, letter from Norbhu Döndup to F. M. Bailey, political officer in Sikkim, dated 1 September 1927.
- 79 Sambo (Rimshi), Interview. Tsarong had already left for India at this time.
- 80 IOR, Mss.Eur. F. 157/214a, diary of F. M. Bailey's trip to Lhasa in 1924, entry for 8 August 1924, reporting a discussion with Tsarong.
- 81 IOR, L/PS/10/1088, letter from the political officer in Sikkim to the Government of India, 27 August 1926. It is widely claimed in Tibetan aristocratic circles that Thrumba Dzasa, the Dalai Lama's nephew, secretly went to his uncle and, in tears, told him that Tsarong might take away his power. Other charges against Tsarong held that he was in league with the British and was taking money from the Nepalese (Tsarong [Rimshi], interview and personal correspondence; Rinchen Drolma Taring, interview). Lungshar was apparently writing secretly to the Dalai Lama that the military was too strong and his authority would be in great danger unless precautionary measures were taken. This was told to Tsarong Shape by the Dalai Lama's other favorite, Kumbela, when Kumbela was in exile in India (Tsarong [Rimshi]), personal correspondence).
- 82 This is, however, precisely what happened.

- 83 IOR, Mss.Eur. F. 157/240, the Dalai Lama's letter cited in letter from Norbhu Döndup to Major F. M. Bailey, dated 7 October 1924.
- 84 IOR, L/PS/10/1088, letter from Williamson, British trade agent in Gyantse, to the political officer in Sikkim, dated 6 March 1925.
- 85 IOR, L/PS/10/1088, letter of Williamson, the British trade agent in Gyantse, to the political officer in Sikkim, dated 10 April 1925; IOR, Mss.Eur. E. 157/240, letter from Norbhu Döndup to the political officer in Sikkim, dated 14 August 1925.
- 86 IOR, L/PS/10/1088, letter from the political officer in Sikkim to the Government of India, dated 20 November 1927. With the exception of Surkhang, all these men had been trained by the British either in Gyantse or in Quetta and Shillong. The only remaining officer with British training was Thrumba Dzasa, and he was trained only in infantry. All the artillery officers had been purged.
- 87 IOR, L/PS/10/1088, letter from the political officer in Sikkim to the Government of India, dated 18 July 1925.
- 88 Taring 1970: 71. Lönchen Sholkang told Norbhu Döndup that Tibet did "not find any necessity of creating a post of Commander-in-Chief and that Tsarong Shape has been killing Sepoy [soldiers] and punishing heavily which were against the religion and further that Tsarong Shape has been exercising too much influence on various subject" (IOR, Mss.Eur. F. 157/240, letter from Norbhu Döndup in Lhasa to Major F. M. Bailey, political officer in Sikkim, dated 29 August 1925).
- 89 *Ibid.*
- 90 IOR, Mss.Eur. F. 157/240, letter from Norbhu Döndup in Lhasa to Major F. M. Bailey, political officer in Sikkim, dated 29 August 1925.
- 91 IOR, Mss.Eur. F. 157/240, letter from Norbhu Döndup to Major F. M. Bailey, political officer in Sikkim, dated 26 August 1927.
- 92 IOR, Mss.Eur. F. 157/240, letter from Norbhu Döndup to Major F. M. Bailey, dated 25 and 26 August 1927. Norbhu Döndup also was in fear for his life. He wrote to Bailey that he had been informed that "some people in Lhasa . . . are against me and speaking badly as I am a strong puller between the British and Tibetan Government and desire to do harm to me . . . however, I shall be careful for my life and shall not die before I have murdered at least two, as I have my rifle and pistol which shall now be kept always loaded" (IOR, Mss.Eur. F. 157/240, letter from Norbhu Döndup to the political officer in Sikkim, dated 12 August 1925).
- 93 IOR, Mss.Eur. F. 157/240, letter from the political officer in Sikkim to Norbhu Döndup in Lhasa, dated 14 August 1925.

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Oral interviews

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| Anon 1, | Tibetan lay official; India. |
| Chunden Drogar, | niece of Surkhang Shape; U.S.A. |
| Rinchen Drolma Taring, | former official; India. |
| Sambo (Rimshi) | former lay official; India. |
| Surkhang, (Wangchen Gelek) | former lay official; India. |
| Tsarong [Rimshi], | former lay official; India. |
| Urgyenla, | former monk official; India. |

THE DANCING LAMAS OF EVEREST

Cinema, orientalism, and Anglo-Tibetan relations
in the 1920s

Peter H. Hansen

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In March 1925, the career civil servants of the India Office in London became film critics. Several mandarins left their offices in Whitehall for the cinemas of the West End to see John Noel's silent film *The Epic of Everest*. Although the film reaches its climax when George Mallory and Andrew Irvine disappear into the clouds near the summit, the India Office officials were there to judge the depiction of Tibet. Much of the film was devoted to the expedition's contact with Tibet. Before each screening, a group of Tibetan lamas – Buddhist monks – performed music, chants, and dances. The official program claimed this was “the first time in history that *real* Tibetan Lamas have come to Europe” and added, “The ceremonies of the lamas, their deep chanting, the blasts of their great trumpets, the beat of their drums and the clashing of their cymbals in the weird and fantastic music will convey to the people in England a feeling of the mysticism and romance of Tibet.”¹

The Tibetan government had lodged official protests against scenes in the film and the performances of the “dancing lamas.” To the Tibetans, Mt. Everest was a sacred place, and the lamas' dances were sacred ceremonies. Although the British officials who went to see the film for themselves were concerned with the finer points of Anglo-Tibetan relations, the diplomatic controversy over the dancing lamas raises broader issues concerning the intersection of the cinema, “Orientalism,” cross-cultural encounters, and diplomatic policy. After attending a performance, Sir Arthur Hirtzel, the permanent undersecretary of state for India, wrote:

I suppose I must be very thick skinned, but the performance did not shock me in the very least. It was unspeakably boring – more so than most things Oriental – but not, I should have thought, capable, even in its lightest moments, of causing anything more than that smile of kindly superiority which we generally assume when we see or hear of strange customs. The audience were informed that there was nothing of a religious nature about the dance. I think the whole thing sounds a great deal worse than it looked; and to that extent I sympathise with the Tibetan authorities.

Although he had not yet seen the film, L. D. Wakely, an undersecretary of state argued that the Tibetans were right to object to a “vulgar and indecent” scene in which a Tibetan man carefully delouses a boy and then appears to eat the lice. “It is as if in some foreign country,” Wakely continued, “a film purporting to show British customs, gave a picture of a man expectorating on the pavement or the floor of a railway carriage, a sight which can be seen any day unfortunately in London and, to complete the comparison, an unfrocked clergyman performed on a organ during the proceedings.”²

But these reservations were not widely shared in England. The filmmakers, the popular press, and the expedition organizers at the Royal Geographical Society (RGS) were all disposed to see the film and the Tibetan performances as amusing representations of a primitive and backward people. Indeed, this “Orientalist” view of the lamas’ visit has enjoyed surprising longevity. In a recent account Walt Unsworth misinterprets the “affair of the dancing lamas” by uncritically accepting the view of the filmmakers that the Tibetan dancers were “more curious than exciting and hardly the sort of thing likely to cause a breach of diplomatic relations.” Even a scholarly account of the British Everest expeditions by Gordon Stewart perpetuates this myth. Stewart reconstructs a teleological “master narrative” of Everest and empire that remained unchallenged, he argues, from the 1890s to 1953.³ In fact, Tibetans challenged British representations of the ascent throughout the 1920s, and the “dancing lamas” disrupted Anglo-Tibetan relations for nearly a decade. Like the climbers of the 1920s, Unsworth and Stewart deny any independent agency to the Tibetans. Unsworth suggests that the fiasco was manufactured by careerist British diplomats. Yet these government officials – who shared many of the same “Orientalist” assumptions as the rest of the lamas’ London audience – were able to override their prejudices in order to maintain cordial relations with Tibet.

Diplomatic negotiations and cultural encounters are too often considered in isolation. The “dancing lamas” of Everest controversy illustrates the possibilities, but also the limitations, of recent approaches to the diplomatic history of Anglo-Tibetan relations in particular and to cultural encounters in the empire in general. Diplomatic historians have reassessed the nature of British “power” in the twentieth century, but they still have difficulty incorporating cultural encounters into the institutional frameworks of foreign policy.⁴ Alastair Lamb and other scholars of Anglo-Tibetan relations often give prominence to the details of treaties and territorial boundaries – the *Primat der Aussenpolitik* – at the expense of the broader cultural assumptions of policymakers.⁵ Melvyn Goldstein offers a detailed and nuanced account of Tibetan politics, emphasizing the primacy of domestic policy in Tibet’s relations with China and Britain.⁶ But traditional approaches like these to foreign or domestic policy reinforce the stereotype of Tibetan isolation by obscuring the extent to which cultural encounters like the “dancing lamas” redefined power outside traditional frameworks. Anglo-Tibetan relations did not occur only in the realms of high policy in Tibet or Britain or China but were the product as well of what Akira Iriye calls “intercultural relations” between these countries.⁷

Many scholars influenced by Edward Said’s *Orientalism* have highlighted the relationship of knowledge and power in the representation of other cultures. Said originally conceived of Orientalism “as a dynamic exchange between individual authors and the large political concerns shaped by the three great empires – British, French,

American – in whose intellectual and imaginative territory the writing was produced.” Tibet’s long-lasting isolation has made it a tempting target for this sort of analysis. Peter Bishop, Philip Almond, and Thomas Richards provide interesting accounts of Buddhism and Tibet as fantasy objects in the Western imagination – as “Shangri La.”⁸ But these works often fail, as Donald Lopez notes of Said’s work, “to consider the networks of exchange that existed between the Orientalizer and the Orientalized, of the back-and-forth that occurred between Europeans and Asians in which Asians were also agents.” In addition, many of these exchanges were, as Charles Hallisey suggests, “not characterized by negation or inversion, but instead seem to represent a kind of ‘intercultural mimesis.’” In other words, the very culture being investigated “influenced the investigator to represent that culture in a certain manner.”⁹ Similarly, recent work in world history and postcolonial studies has also attempted to reconceptualize relations between colonizer and colonized as reciprocal and mutually constitutive.¹⁰ While Said’s more recent *Culture and Imperialism* is more sensitive to the overlapping and intertwined positions of colonial histories, he once again concentrates on the artifacts of “high” culture, which were by no means the most important products of cultural exchange.¹¹

Recent research on the display of “natives” during the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries in popular entertainments, exhibitions, and museums identifies more complicated power relations. Many exhibitions displayed indigenous peoples in “native villages” to convey narratives of Social Darwinist evolution, racial superiority, and material progress.¹² These exhibitions reached absurd heights during the Hendon Air Pageants of the 1920s, when the Royal Air Force literally bombed mock “native villages” into submission.¹³ That such brute force was not the most common representation of power, however, is suggested by recent studies influenced by Michel Foucault, Said, and feminism. Tony Bennett suggests that native bodies were part of an “exhibitionary complex,” in which European visitors were instructed in a form of self-monitoring discipline that supplemented the sterner surveillance of Foucault’s prisons. Similarly, Timothy Mitchell argues that exhibitions created a division between reality and its representation that ordered the “world-as-exhibition” and was the intellectual foundation of “Orientalism.” In these frameworks, however, power is so totalizing that the “Other” remains primarily an object of curiosity before European observers. In contrast, Donna Haraway draws attention to the ambivalence of Carl Akeley’s attempt, in his African exhibits of the 1930s at the American Museum of Natural History, to link the art of taxidermy with the politics of eugenics in order to preserve a masculinity threatened by decadence. Haraway’s feminist reading disrupts the heroic narrative of Akeley’s exhibits by attending to the agency of his formerly invisible collaborators, Akeley’s wife, secretary, patrons, and African assistants.¹⁴

Together, these approaches to diplomacy, Orientalism, and exhibitions suggest the complexity of Anglo-Tibetan power relations during the affair of the dancing lamas. From the diplomatic negotiations for permission to climb Everest to the Anglo-Tibetan encounter during the expeditions themselves and the performances of the dancing lamas in London, Anglo-Tibetan relations integrated culture and power. Anglo-Tibetan relations were not disrupted by the intervention of “culture” into “diplomacy,” for these arenas were, as Said rightly argues, never entirely separate. Tibetans gave permission for the ascent of Everest in the expectation that the British would supply weapons to Tibet and with assurances that the expedition would respect

Tibetan religious beliefs. While the British kept their promise to supply arms, their repeated failure to respect Tibetan Buddhism in either London or Lhasa cooled Anglo-Tibetan relations. In addition, the dancing lamas and the Everest film appeared at a time when the cinema and the mass media exerted an increasing influence in Britain and around the world.¹⁵ In response to Orientalist representations of the dancing lamas in these new media, Tibetans defined subject positions for themselves in ways that transformed not only Anglo-Tibetan diplomacy but also internal politics in Tibet. British climbers and diplomats became not just filmmakers or film critics but culture brokers. While Anglo-Tibetan relations were mediated by Orientalism, they were not reducible to it. Indeed, throughout the Everest expeditions and the performances of the dancing lamas, the British and Tibetans were engaged in an intercultural exchange in which each influenced the other in unexpected and ambiguous ways. The dancing lamas of Everest thus illuminate the complex interaction of media, culture, and power.

Throughout the nineteenth century, access to Mt. Everest was restricted by Tibet's relationship with China, Britain, and Russia. Most foreigners had been excluded from Tibet since the late eighteenth century, when Tibet recognized Chinese "suzerainty." Less hegemonic than "sovereignty," this Sino-Tibetan relationship was continually reconstituted by Tibetan lamas and Manchu emperors through the ritual practices of Tibetan Buddhism.¹⁶ As the Ch'ing dynasty weakened during the nineteenth century, its influence in Tibet also waned, and British officials feared that Russia might extend its influence into Tibet. To forestall Russian intrigues, Lord Curzon, as viceroy of India, sent Francis Younghusband to Tibet in 1904 with a well-armed mission that killed hundreds of Tibetans en route to Lhasa. In response, the Dalai Lama fled to Mongolia and visited Peking. The British government later repudiated the treaties with Tibet that Younghusband had negotiated, and it signed agreements with China in 1906 recognizing Chinese "suzerainty" in Tibet. In 1907, an Anglo-Russian accord prohibited further expeditions in Tibet and effectively prevented British mountaineers from approaching Everest before World War I.¹⁷

Tibet's relationship with China remained an obstacle to Everest proposals throughout the 1910s. Chinese troops occupied Lhasa in 1910, and the Dalai Lama, who had only recently returned to Tibet, fled to India, where he began to rely on British intermediaries in dealing with China. The Chinese occupation ended with the overthrow of the Manchu dynasty in 1911, and the Dalai Lama returned to Tibet with greater sympathy for his British hosts and a new commitment to reform Tibet's military. In 1913-1914, China refused to sign with Britain and Tibet the tripartite "Simla Convention" that attempted to fix Tibet's borders, establish a degree of Tibetan autonomy from China, and secure British trading rights with Tibet. After Tibetans used British weapons to repulse another Chinese attack in 1917, British officials negotiated a precarious cease-fire on Tibet's eastern border in 1918. However, the cost of maintaining the troops necessary to fight such conflicts – and the need for additional weapons – increased Tibet's diplomatic dependence on the British. Within Tibet, these events also put a heavy burden on Tibetan finances and strained relations between the military and the monasteries.¹⁸

In this context, Captain John Noel lectured in 1919 at the Royal Geographical Society about his pre-war travels in the vicinity of Everest, and Sir Thomas Holdich,

the RGS president, officially proposed the ascent of Everest as “the outstanding task which remains for geographers to accomplish.” British officials were sympathetic, but diplomatic concerns remained paramount. Sir Edwin Montagu, the secretary of state for India, wrote in 1919 to Lord Chelmsford, the viceroy, that “a task of such magnitude and geographical importance, if it is to be undertaken at all, should be intrusted to qualified British explorers acting under the highest geographical auspices in the British Empire.” The viceroy was concerned that any expedition would interfere with British plans to counter a Japanese telegraph proposed for Tibet. British officials were concerned that the postwar extension of Japanese influence into China could threaten the stability of India’s northern frontier. As J. E. Shuckburgh, secretary of the Political Department at the India Office, noted in 1919, “However much one may sympathise with the desire to conquer Mt. Everest, the results of such a conquest would be largely academic and ought not to weigh against a means of minimizing Japanese influence in Tibet.”¹⁹

After revolution and civil war in Russia and China undermined central authority in these states, British officials began to look beyond earlier diplomatic concerns. The Japanese threat to Tibet receded when civil war removed Szechuan and Yunnan from central Chinese control, and Bolshevik victories over the White Russians also made the Anglo-Russian agreement a dead letter. Shuckburgh took a more favorable view of an Everest expedition in 1920, recording, “it has always been the policy of this Office to encourage geographical exploration so far as may be compatible with political exigencies.” British diplomats remained concerned however, that earlier promises to supply Tibet with weapons might violate an international arms embargo on China. After the Chinese province of Kansu sent a diplomatic mission to Tibet in 1920, Britain decided to send its own representative to Lhasa. Sir Charles Bell, the political officer of Sikkim, who was on friendly terms with the Dalai Lama.²⁰

Meanwhile, the climbers were lobbying hard in London and India for permission to climb Everest. Sir Francis Younghusband, who had led the 1904 British expedition to Tibet and was then RGS president, gave lectures in order to build public support. “Although there was no more use in climbing Mount Everest than in kicking a football about, or dancing,” Younghusband told a London audience, the ascent would “elevate the human spirit,” and give men the feeling that “they were getting the upper hand on the earth, and that they were acquiring a true mastery of their surroundings.” The RGS negotiated with the India Office in London, while Lt.-Col. Charles Howard-Bury, a retired officer and Anglo-Irish landowner, sounded out officials in India, including Bell, the chief liaison with Tibet.²¹

Bell opposed seeking permission, because several sacred places were in the vicinity of Everest and the ascent would engender suspicion and mistrust among the Tibetans. “The Tibetans will not believe that the explorations are carried out only in the interests of geographical knowledge and science,” said Bell. “They will suspect that there is something behind what we tell them.”²²

Nonetheless, the Dalai Lama gave permission for an attempt on Everest during Bell’s visit to Lhasa in 1920–1921. Bell had explained to the Dalai Lama that “the ascent was expected to have scientific results that would benefit humanity, and that a good many people in Britain wanted Britons to be the first to climb the highest mountain in the world.” Preempting Tibetan suspicions of a scientific expedition, Bell assured the Dalai Lama that “no harm to Tibet was likely to result from it, and that

His Holiness knew me well enough to realise that I would not say this unless I really meant it.”²³ On Bell’s advice, the British subsequently kept their promise to supply Tibet with weapons. In Tibet’s internal politics, the Everest expeditions thus became irrevocably linked to the fortunes of the military, which, with the Dalai Lama, was attempting to reform the Tibetan state in spite of monastic opposition. In communicating the Tibetan decision, Bell added, “No doubt every care to avoid wounding religious or other feelings will be taken during the expedition.” Younghusband assured the Dalai Lama that he would impress upon the expedition “the importance of treating all of Your Holiness’ officials and subjects with every possible courtesy and of showing all due respect to their religious feelings.”²⁴

The first Everest expedition became a reconnaissance and included surveyors from the Survey of India, who mapped the surrounding area, a geologist from the Geological Survey, who studied the region’s minerals, and finally the climbers, who searched for a suitable route to the summit. Although government departments paid the expenses of the surveyors, their separate agendas dissipated the expedition’s singleness of purpose. They also threatened to go beyond what the Tibetans had allowed. Wary of these plans, Charles Bell advised prohibiting all surveying except whatever is “indispensably necessary for the ascent of Mount Everest.”²⁵ As a result of these competing agendas, the expedition was a scientific success but a diplomatic failure. As intended, the surveyors mapped, the geologist dug, and the climbers climbed, locating a possible route via the North Col.

But the expedition caused anxiety in Tibet. The expedition’s leader, Lt.-Col. Howard-Bury, noted: “in these out-of-the way parts they had heard vaguely of the fighting, in 1904, and they imagined that our visit might be on the same lines. They imagined, too, that all Europeans were cruel and seized what they wanted without payment.”²⁶ The local official in Dingri, for example, wrote to Lhasa to complain about having to supply the expedition: “As the people of this country are poor, I would request that you kindly approach the British (Political Officer) with a view to effecting an early removal of the Sahibs from this place, so that they may not settle down permanently.” The Tibetan government complained that the expedition had shot animals and “dug up rubies and taken them away.” The prime minister of Tibet explained to Bell:

It was agreed between the British and Tibetans that Mount Everest might be explored. But if this is used as an excuse for digging earth and stones from the most sacred hills of Tibet, inhabited by fierce demons, the very guardians of the soil, it is feared that human and cattle epidemics may break out in the country, causing serious loss of life. I would therefore [urge] that you will kindly take the necessary steps to prevent the officials wandering about the mountains in Tibet, and effect their early return.²⁷

By this time, Bell’s place had been taken by Colonel F. M. Bailey, an official who had been with Younghusband in 1904 and served as an explorer in Tibet and an undercover agent in Tashkent. Bailey encouraged the Everest expeditions but relayed Tibetan complaints about shooting, geology, and the survey to Younghusband: “Bell himself was not exactly sympathetic, and told me that he thought it was pretty cool to get permission to climb a mountain and then go and make a map!” Younghusband

replied to the India Office that, although the expedition geologist had taken a few specimens, no mining had been done and no precious minerals were taken: "It is possible that the ice-axes of the party may have been mistaken by the Tibetans for mining implements."²⁸

Since the Tibetans had objected to hunting and digging, the Royal Geographical Society promised to prohibit all shooting and prevented the geologist from joining the next expedition.²⁹ The 1922 expedition, led by General C. G. Bruce, achieved decidedly mixed results. Although the climbers failed to reach the summit, they went higher than ever before. Seven porters were killed in an avalanche, but the expedition managed not to offend the authorities in Lhasa. In addition, for the first time, the climbers met the head lama of Rongbuk Monastery, located at the foot of Everest. This was Zatul Rinpoche, an energetic and charismatic man who had founded the monastery twenty years before.³⁰

General Bruce and the Rongbuk Lama each left firsthand accounts of their meeting. Their conflicting versions illustrate the complexity of power relations and "Orientalism" in the encounter between the British and Tibetans. In his expedition book, Bruce reports that the Rongbuk Lama's "inquiries about the object of the Expedition were intelligent, although at the same time they were very difficult to answer." Bruce had often been asked similar questions in England: "What is the good of an exploration of Everest?" "What can you get out of it?" and so on.

As a matter of fact, it was very much easier to answer the Lama than it is to answer inquiries in England. The Tibetan Lama, especially of the better class, is certainly not a materialist. I was fortunately inspired to say that we regarded the whole Expedition, and especially our attempt to reach the summit of Everest as a pilgrimage. I am afraid, also, I rather enlarged on the importance of the vows taken by all members of the Expedition. At any rate, these gentle "white lies" were very well received.

After the lama blessed the expedition and wished them success, Bruce continues, "He was very anxious that no animals of any sort be interfered with, which we promised, for we had already given our word not to shoot during our Expedition in Tibet. He did not seem to have the least fear that our exploring the mountain would upset the demons who live there but he told me that it was perfectly true that the Upper Rongbuk and its glaciers held no less than five wild men."³¹

In his autobiography, the Rongbuk Lama gives a strikingly different account of this conversation. After General Bruce gave him a photograph of the Dalai Lama and a gold brocade with a ceremonial scarf, the Rongbuk Lama asked, "Where are you going?"

"As this snow peak is the biggest in the world, if we arrive on the summit we will get from the British Government a recompense and high rank," he [Bruce] said.

I replied, "As our country is bitterly cold and frosty, it is difficult for others than those who are devoted to religion not to come to harm. As the local spirits are furies, you must act with great firmness."

"Thank you [replied Bruce]. As we shall also come under the lama's protection, we trust you will allow us to collect a little brushwood for firewood.

Moreover we won't harm the birds and the wild animals in this area. I swear we have no kinds of weapons apart from this little knife, the size of a side-knife."

After saying this they took their leave. Then from here, according to the custom of the country, I had conveyed to them a carcass of meat, a brick of tea, and a platterful of roasted wheat flour.³²

Nowhere does Zatul Rinpoche mention that Bruce represented the ascent as a "pilgrimage." Nowhere does the general claim to have told the lama that the climbers would receive "recompense and high rank." The general claims that the lama was concerned about hunting; Zatul Rinpoche suggests that Bruce volunteered the promise not to hunt.

These accounts are compared, not to reconstruct what was "really" said but as competing representations in which the lama and the general each claim the subject position of power in their own account. On the one hand, Bruce's "gentle 'white lie'" establishes an ironic distance between himself and the lama, a pilgrimage, mountain demons, and Buddhism. Such a rhetorical strategy is an example of the "flexible positional superiority" of Orientalism.³³ On the other hand, the lama *also* claims such a position of superiority when he represents the general asking for the expedition to be taken "under the lama's protection" and the lama reciprocates with rituals of incorporation and gifts of hospitality "according to the custom of the country." Bruce sensed this act of incorporation and was uncomfortable with it. According to the general, the lama told him "that in a previous incarnation I had been a Tibetan Lama. I do not know exactly how to take this." Tibetans often told foreign visitors that they had been Tibetans in a previous life to symbolize their welcome into the community. The Rongbuk Lama may also have made this comment to establish a more complex "lama-patron" or "teacher-pupil" relationship with the general.³⁴

Uncomfortable though he was at the time, as a result of his contact with the Rongbuk Lama and Tibetan Buddhism in 1922 Bruce offered a new explanation of why the British wanted to conquer Mt. Everest when the climbers returned to London. Previously, the climbers had justified the ascent as advancing scientific knowledge, elevating the "human spirit," and as an inspirational contest between man and nature.³⁵ Before the 1924 expedition, however, in an article for the *Times*, Bruce mingled the language of science and pilgrimage. "It is possible that certain branches of science may benefit from the experiences of the party, but the dominant note of the whole undertaking, first, last, and foremost, is a great adventure – almost now become a pilgrimage. Did we not explain to the lama of the Rongbuk, the Sang Rinpoche, that it was for us an attempt to reach the highest point on earth as being the nearest to heaven?"³⁶

But Tibetan mountain pilgrimages involved walking *around* the mountain, not climbing up it. While Bruce's explanation – ascent as pilgrimage – had antecedents in Britain, it was not widely circulated concerning Everest until it was imported from Tibet.³⁷ As the primary public spokesman for the Everest expeditions and films in the 1920s, Younghusband came to embody these dual perspectives and their hybrid origins in Britain and Tibet.

The Anglo-Tibetan encounter also deeply influenced Captain John Noel, film-maker, photographer, and entrepreneur, who joined the Everest expeditions in 1922 and 1924. Noel had been greatly impressed by Herbert Ponting's films about Antarctic

expeditions, and he planned his projects during a period of escalating interest in films of fact and “documentaries”.³⁸ Noel’s first effort, *Climbing Mount Everest* (1922), is less about climbing than about the climbers’ encounter with Tibet. Like many similar travel and exploration films of the period, most of this film is an anthropological travelogue of Tibetan life.³⁹ As one intertitle announces, “Visiting the towns of Kamba, Shekar and the Monastery of Rongbuk, we gained many interesting glimpses into the life, manners, and customs of the strange people of Tibet.” One of the longest, and by far the most interesting, sequences in the film shows the lamas at Rongbuk Monastery performing “devil dances.” When the film appeared in England, it was accompanied by Tibetan music composed by Howard Somervell, one of the climbers, who later became a medical missionary in India.⁴⁰

Noel’s first film is descriptive and lacks drama, especially when compared to Robert Flaherty’s *Nanook of the North*, another 1922 film that largely defined the genre of ethnographic documentary.⁴¹ General Bruce and the Rongbuk Lama are the only individuals who receive much attention until the final climbing scenes. Noel reached the North Col and watched the climbers attain record heights, but shots of wind-blown ridges and tiny climbers on snow slopes contained little drama. The film does not show the avalanche that killed seven porters. The climbers’ failure to reach the summit overshadowed the technical breakthroughs of Noel and his team of Sherpa porters filming at 23,000 feet and developing film under harsh conditions in a tent at 16,000 feet. His film concludes with an advertisement for the next expedition and film. “They will return to this terrific battle with nature, and despite the dangers, the storms and the cold they will win through – They will conquer, and they will yet stand on the summit of Everest – the very topmost pinnacle of the earth.”⁴²

When the British received permission to return to Everest in 1924, John Noel again accompanied the expedition. Noel formed Explorer Films, Ltd., with Younghusband as chairman, which paid an astonishing £8,000 for the film and photographic rights. Together with the *Times*’ payment of £1,000 for publication of the expedition’s dispatches, these syndication rights paid for most of the expedition’s £10,000 expenses. Noel also arranged to send newsreel footage during the expedition to Pathé News.⁴³ Although such rights made the expedition financially viable, the Royal Geographical Society lost control over how the expedition – and Tibet – were represented in the film and in its publicity. Noel publicized his coming attraction before the expedition left England by advertising the film as a struggle between man and nature. According to the *Weekly Dispatch*, the film would feature “Everest as leading lady” and “man’s passionate struggle to conquer the dreadful virgin of the snows.” “Everest will be characterised as an inhuman ‘vampire’ – a whitened Jezebel of the Himalayas – who contemptuously flings blinding storms and deadly avalanches upon too daring suitors.” In language more typical of the rest of the pre-expedition publicity, Noel told *Bioscope* that his film should be “not merely a stereotyped record of travel but . . . should embody, in the form of a continuous narrative, the romantic spirit of this fight between Man and Nature in her most formidable aspect.” Privately, Noel told Bruce that he planned to make two films, one of the expedition to be shown if the mountain were climbed and another to be used in the event of failure, “dealing with the life of the people in Tibet, Sikkim and Bhutan.”⁴⁴

These plans were overtaken by events during the expedition in 1924. General Bruce, who had been featured in all the early news articles, was sent home with an irregular

heartbeat before the party reached Everest. Instead of conquering the mountain, Mallory and Irvine lost their lives near the summit. Two of Noel's publicity stunts on location – driving a Citroën tractor into Tibet and posting letters from the mountain with his own Everest stamp – were dependent on recalcitrant Tibetan mules and yaks.⁴⁵ As the expedition returned to India, Noel put into effect a plan he had considered before leaving London: to bring home a group of Tibetans, Nepalese, or Sherpas to perform with the film. Noel hoped to duplicate the success the previous year of *The Covered Wagon*, an epic western that had been preceded by a “live prologue” of Arapahoes dancing in war paint and headdresses.⁴⁶

Noel's 1924 Everest film also competed with other expedition films and representations of Tibet in London. Several Europeans had recently attracted attention by traveling to Lhasa in disguise.⁴⁷ In addition, a Parsee promoter in Darjeeling planned to present Tibetan dancers at the British Empire Exhibition at Wembley in the summer of 1924. After pointing out in Parliament that “devil dancers” were being recruited in Darjeeling to perform at Wembley, Lt.-Col. James asked the undersecretary of state for India “whether he is aware that devil dances have a deep religious significance to the Buddhist priests and other Buddhists in Tibet and that the proposed scheme is arousing strong feelings of religious resentment and apprehension.”⁴⁸ In response, the India Office expressed its desire to be sensitive to these concerns. Since Wembley “devil dancers” were not “real” lamas, the Tibetan authorities permitted them to go “provided no religious dances were performed.” However, the Wembley dancers were dressed in religious masks and cheap imitations of religious robes, used religious trumpets, and performed a parody of Tibetan religious dances. They were also seen at Wembley by Rinzin Dorje Ringang, a Tibetan engineer educated at Rugby and Northampton Polytechnic Institute, who considered their performance an insult to Tibet and Buddhism. As a result, Bailey and other officials arranged that any future visits by Tibetan lamas would be strictly regulated to avoid anything blasphemous or offensive.⁴⁹

Before *The Epic of Everest* opened in London, Bailey tried to warn the Royal Geographical Society of potential difficulties. Bailey told Arthur Hinks, RGS secretary, that the “lice-eating” scene had caused offense when the film had been shown in India. “The Tibetans say that this is not typical and will give the world the wrong impression.” Later, after learning that Noel's lamas had been taken to England, Bailey alerted Hinks to the problems caused by the earlier dancers at Wembley. “The Tibetans are very touchy about their religion, and I hope nothing will be done in connection with the Everest Film to offend them. In particular, any dances performed with long trumpets and other instruments which are only used in religious ceremonies, or dances in religious masks or robes will give offense.”⁵⁰ These warnings resulted in only minor changes, however, and the film opened in December 1924 with the lamas supplying the fanfare.

The popular press was fascinated by the Tibetan lamas whom Noel brought back to perform with the film. Pathé newsreels showed Noel at the port of London greeting “Six Holy Lamas from Thibet – hermits who live 14,000 ft. up the mountain.” Newspapers described the lamas with many of the stock stereotypes of Orientalist discourse. The questionable legal status of the Tibetans caused comment and some creative reporting. Under the headline “Seven Lamas Come to Town. Escape from

Tibet as Bales of Fur,” the *Daily News* reported that Noel had persuaded the lamas “to leave Tibet for the first time. The disguise was necessary owing to the extreme difficulty for a lama to get out of his country.” Several papers reported on their search for housing in London. According to the *Daily Chronicle*, the film company had the following requirements: “As well as being near the theatre, the landlord must not mind sacrifices and religious ceremonies of any kind taking place on his premises.”⁵¹

The lamas’ position as religious leaders also led to ambivalent representations of the lamas as sources of humor or inspiration. “Bishop to Dance on Stage. High Dignitaries of Tibetan Church Reach London. Music from Skulls. Tom-Tom Ceremonies from the Himalayas,” ran the telegraphic headlines of the *Daily Sketch*. “Even now the Lama imagines that the Scala Theatre is a kind of temple,” wrote the *Daily Chronicle*, “and I imagine he will go home with some queer ideas of our religious services if he regards the audience as a congregation of the faithful.” The *Times* reported that on the lamas’ visit to the Houses of Parliament, “it took some time before they could be made to understand that the statues they saw were of statesmen, and not images of the gods of the British.”⁵²

Alongside such Orientalist humor were images of the lamas as inspirational mystics. During the nineteenth century, British scholars had defined Buddhism as a textual object under their control. By studying its ancient texts, these scholars aimed to recover the “essence” of Buddhism that preceded its “decline” into contemporary practices. Tibetan Buddhism was represented by the British as a peculiarly degenerate form of Buddhism known as “Lamaism.” As the word made flesh, the dancing lamas of Everest generated intense interest among adherents of a variety of religions in Britain, from Buddhism to theosophy to mainstream churches.⁵³ Earlier in 1924, British Buddhists had sent their own mission to Tibet. Although the group was stopped at Gyantse, William McGovern continued to Lhasa in disguise. In London, the archbishop of Canterbury, who received the dancing lamas in an official visit, said “the visit of the Lama to England,” “was a unique thing in the story of the world.”⁵⁴

Expressions of sympathy for the lamas could also take the form of Orientalist condescension. The *Sunday Express* noted that the lamas “will perform on stage some of the ceremonies of their religion to the accompaniment of their own weird musical instruments.” To this the writer added, “I cannot imagine anything more likely to kill the romance and mystery of Tibet than this ill-conceived idea of bringing some of the holy men of Buddhism to play in a masquerade of their religion on a London stage.” The main objection, however, was not over offending the Tibetans but killing an Orientalist representation – “the romance and mystery of Tibet.” The *Referee* defended the Everest Committee as “a body of such dignity and responsibility that it ought to be immune from insinuations of sensationalism.” The *Referee* noted that, in response to criticism, the Tibetans “will not perform any religious ceremonial on the Scala stage. What would be the sacrilege if they did? The people who go to see the Everest film will not be in search of illicit sensation. They will go as a matter of interest and to pay tribute to a very heroic adventure.” But the film’s publicity emphasized the sensationalism of the lamas over the heroism of the climbers. According to the *Daily Mirror*, “looking exactly like Christmas decorations [the lamas] created an enormous sensation.” Their hats, robes, and instruments “convinced the cab-driver that they were ‘all dressed up for some advertising stunt.’”⁵⁵

The lamas' appearances in London were well orchestrated. Many newspapers carried the same photographs, used the same quotations, and emphasized the same details – as if taken from the same press release. Upon seeing London, the lamas were said to exclaim, “City of Devils,” “What a big Bazaar,” and “Ah Yamchen” (how wonderful). A few individuals received special attention in stereotypical terms. The Head lama “occasionally makes a guttural but dignified comment on the strange sights that London unfolds,” and he possessed an “inscrutable, Sphinx-like stare.” The one Sherpa brought to London, Lhakpa Tsering was a “Tibetan Napoleon-porter-and-man-of-all-work [and] one of the three porters who last saw Mallory and Irvine alive.”⁵⁶ In their most striking publicity stunt, the Tibetan lamas visited the London Zoo. One photograph of the visit shows the lamas reaching over the fence to pet a camel, while the caption explains that the lamas also visited the llamas at the zoo. Another photograph shows a zookeeper in the center of the frame holding out a fish. In the right foreground, two sea lions reach up to catch the fish. Directly opposite them in the left foreground, a cluster of five lamas watch the feeding. Both the sea lions and the lamas are on display, both represented as part of the zoo.⁵⁷

The cinema trade press conveyed similar themes regarding the film itself. Before its opening, all of the trade press commented that critics in India had appreciated the film's drama “and even its comedy – the latter contained in scenes showing the intimate life of the Tibetans.” In addition, the deaths of Mallory and Irvine turned the film into a tragedy “but a tragedy of the most glorious and inspiring sort.”⁵⁸ *Cinema* remarked that the lamas' music creates “a peculiar semi-religious impression almost like a narcotic to the senses.” *Bioscope* concluded that the lamas were an “immensely effective prologue to the film,” and the *British Journal of Photography* opined that the lamas added “a valuable touch of local colour.”⁵⁹

But the presence of the lamas added something more. The main theme of the *Epic of Everest* was the liberating presence of the extroverted, aggressive, and manly British climbers amid the introversion, passivity, and squalor of the mystical Tibetans. The village of Phari was singled out for its filth in this intertitle: “Amid dirt and mud and stinking refuse, the people live with their dogs and cattle in these hovels, begrimed with the smoke of the argo fires.” The film explicitly established the contrast between the people of Tibet and the purity of the mountains: “And in contrast to all this, the cold purity of the snows of Cholmolhari puts to eternal shame the dirt of Phari.” The ethnographic details placed in bold relief the purity of the mountain and its climbers. The dancing lamas also accentuated the film's contrast between the masculine climbers and the mystical Tibetans. After the expedition reached the mountain, an intertitle announced: “Into the heart of the pure blue ice, rare, cold beautiful, lonely – Into a Fairyland of Ice. It is of this Fairyland that you shall now see, that the Tibetan legends speak of Imps, Gnomes, Goblins and Hairy Men holding high revels during the frozen night.”⁶⁰

Into these snows of superstition, the film immediately showed the British climbers walking confidently among large boulders and towers of glacial ice. Then they climbed the ice slopes to the North Col at 23,000 feet. “Physically incapable of carrying our camera higher, we can only watch these supermen returning from building two higher camps at 25,000 and 27,000 feet after breaking all records of human endurance.” Before showing the mountain, the film had introduced the British climbers by name, personalizing the expedition and adding to the melodramatic contrast between the

British and Tibetans. The disappearance of Mallory and Irvine was rendered as “the historic climax of our adventure – glorious because of the marvel of attainment – sad because of the tragedy of death.” In its own mystical explanation, the film concluded by invoking the mysterious powers of the head lama of Rongbuk Monastery, who had predicted the failure of the expedition.⁶¹

Tibetan authorities had much to complain about after the 1924 expedition. On their return from the mountain, the climbers made two journeys – to the Rongshar Valley to recuperate and to Lhatse to survey – which went beyond what had been allowed in the passports from the Dalai Lama.⁶² But Noel’s film and the dancing lamas generated far more serious complaints and long-term consequences. In response to Bailey’s warnings, Noel agreed that the lamas would not perform religious dances, but he kept the “lice-eating” scene in his film. According to Noel, as a man picks a child’s hair clean, “he performs the usual Tibetan custom of killing what he finds with his teeth. This scene does not show him eating anything.” Hinks advised, “the distinction between ‘killing with the teeth’ and ‘eating’ is rather a fine one for the public, but I will leave that to you.”⁶³ In a still photograph from the film that may represent the scene (now missing), the man and boy are seated next to a woman holding in her lap a small primate, and the Tibetan – primate parallel may have contributed to Tibetan indignation.⁶⁴ Hinks reassured Bailey that Noel explained to the audience that the dances were not religious. “To tell the truth,” Hinks wrote, “it is rather difficult to say what they are,” and he compared them to “a Morris dance of a very ungainly kind.” Hinks conceded that their musical instruments might be the same as those used in religious ceremonies, though he disclaimed any RGS responsibility since the film was in the hands of a private company.⁶⁵

Despite these disclaimers, the dancing lamas caused the cancellation of future expeditions to Everest and threatened broader Anglo-Tibetan relations by the spring of 1925. “Apart from the question of the relations between the Tibetans and the Everest Expedition,” Bailey warned, “I feel that their whole attitude towards us will be affected by this.” Tsarong Shape, the Tibetan commander-in-chief and the official who was most sympathetic to the British, told Bailey, “from the beginning the Tibetan government disliked the expedition owing to the sacredness of the mountain, but . . . Sir C. Bell brought considerable pressure, and, as the Tibetan Government were about to receive great favours (arms, etc.) from the Govt. of India, consent was given.”⁶⁶ In April 1925, the Tibetan government denied permission for future expeditions. The prime minister of Tibet complained to Bailey about the unauthorized journeys. “Over and above this, they have enticed and taken away to England four or five monks, whose photos as dancers have appeared recently in the newspapers. We regard this action on the part of the Sahibs as very unbecoming. For the future, we cannot give them permission to go to Tibet.” The prime minister also demanded “the immediate return to Tibet and handing over of the monks, who have been taken away deceitfully.”⁶⁷

The Tibetan decision opened a breach between the Royal Geographical Society and the British government. To Hinks and Noel, the Tibetans possessed no independent agency. Any objection to the Everest expeditions could not originate with the Tibetans, they argued, but must have been manufactured by British officials, namely Bailey. As Noel wrote to Hinks:

The opinions that Major Bailey quotes as coming from the Tibetans are entirely from himself, and if people in England understood the real position of a Political Officer in India, they would know that he has such a peculiar position that the Government refers all matters to him and he practically dictates any answer he wishes, putting the authority on to the native people, because they accept his advice and he advises them to do what he wishes.

Noel silences the Tibetans and projects the habit of speaking for the Tibetans onto Bailey. In correspondence with the India Office that dragged on for months, Hinks continued to criticize Bailey. "We cannot help feeling that the refusal is due to what looks like an exaggerated deference to the more reactionary side of Tibetan feeling paid by the Political Officer in Sikkim."⁶⁸

The India Office asked Noel and the other members of the expedition to explain their actions. The expedition was excused for its visit to the Rongshar Valley, but no justification could be found for the survey to Lhatse or for bringing the lamas to England. In particular, the India Office asked Noel to supply the official documents that, he claimed, gave permission for the lamas' visit. There were none. The India Office bureaucrats were then brutally frank in their criticism of Noel. "He is also either disingenuous or much misinformed; if the former, his letter tends to support the Tibetan charge of 'deceitfulness'; if the latter, he is obviously a careless organizer, and not qualified for the business he undertook." A thorough investigation in India and Tibet concluded that "Captain Noel's statement about the monks taken to England is in direct variance with the facts."⁶⁹ The lamas left Tibet without the knowledge of the officials of the Gyantse monastery or of the Tibetan government. Once the lamas arrived in India, their escort, John Macdonald, the son of a former trade agent in Gyantse, obtained police permits in Calcutta after passports had been denied in Darjeeling.⁷⁰ Noel took Macdonald at his word that he had obtained the necessary passports, when, in fact, Macdonald had not. Hinks was ultimately forced to apologize: "The Committee regret very deeply the humiliating position in which they were placed by the discovery that Captain Noel's statements were incorrect." Taking Noel's statements at face value, Walt Unsworth recently claimed that Bailey was "putting words into Lhasa's mouth." Unsworth even concludes that "one cannot help but agree with Noel that Bailey fixed the whole affair from start to finish." Unsworth suggests that Bailey wanted to stop the Everest expeditions to avoid paperwork and because Bailey wanted to climb Everest himself.⁷¹

If Bailey had been the obstacle, the Tibetans might have granted permission in 1928, when Bailey was replaced as political officer of Sikkim by Lt.-Col. Leslie Weir. But the Tibetan government did not give permission for another Everest expedition until 1932, after the renewal of Sino-Tibetan hostilities. When Weir visited Lhasa in 1930, he found the Tibetans still averse to British travel in Tibet in general and to Mt. Everest in particular. The Tibetans, Weir wrote to Hinks, "stress the hardship on the local inhabitants in having to supply supplies and transport in localities where such are procurable." They also feared spying and harbored a "strong resentment against the last Everest Expedition." The Dalai Lama saw pictures of the "dancing lamas" in the weekly picture papers and reportedly looked "on the whole affair as a direct affront to the religion of which he is the head." In addition, the maharajah of Sikkim and an agent of the maharajah of Bhutan had seen the film in Darjeeling and found

the “lice-eating” scene “extremely repugnant.”⁷² In 1929, Kenneth Mason, assistant surveyor general in India, told Hinks that “neither Tibet, nor Sikkim, nor Bhutan will have Noel in their countries.” The government of India supported their decisions, and so did Mason. “Our travellers must be more circumspect when they enter Native States or foreign countries, and not behave as though the whole place belongs to them.”⁷³

Both the India Office and the Royal Geographical Society framed the debate over the dancing lamas in such binary terms – Bailey versus Noel – that they excluded any space for Tibetan agency. Yet the exchange between British and Tibetans was far more complicated and reciprocal than this dichotomy allows. During and after the controversy, Noel, the dancing lamas, Bailey, and Tsarong Shape each occupied subject positions transformed by the Anglo-Tibetan encounter. Their new roles, in turn, exerted a direct influence on the internal politics of Tibet.

Noel described the Everest expeditions in his book, *Through Tibet to Everest* (1927), as an encounter between “the inert East and the inquisitive, impertinent West.” But Noel’s relationship with Tibet was more ambiguous than his rhetoric. Noel’s modest ambitions as an amateur anthropologist led him to make films that were amalgams of adventure tales and ethnographic travelogues. In different ways, both Noel and his wife – he was a Roman Catholic, she was a psychic – were deeply influenced by Tibet. Noel devoted a long chapter to Tibetan customs, and his wife later published a collection of Tibetan folk tales based on material she collected while Noel was on the mountain in 1924.⁷⁴

As a result of the diplomatic controversy, Noel and the dancing lamas both became prophets without honor in their own countries. After Noel took the film and the dancing lamas on tour in Europe, his film failed to find a distributor in the United States. Noel’s company filed for bankruptcy, and he went on tour without the lamas in North America. British diplomats prevented Noel from organizing Himalayan expeditions from Berlin or Washington, D.C.⁷⁵ While it is unclear why the dancing lamas agreed to go to London, it is possible that they intended to be Buddhist “missionaries” or cultural ambassadors. Whatever their intentions, the few dancing lamas who returned to Tibet were severely punished. Most chose to remain exiles in Darjeeling. Although the decision not to return to Tibet shows that they were aware of the affair, the lamas themselves left no firsthand accounts of what they thought of the controversy.

While in London, however, the dancing lamas were aware of how they were portrayed in the press, and they attempted to resist Orientalist representations. During one tour of the city, Gana Suta Chempo, the head lama, chastised two of the others for laughing out loud at something they saw. “When two of his band so far forgot themselves as to lose their impassivity in their delight, he promptly boxed their ears, recalling them to attention and in the presence of a growing and wondering throng, administered a sharp lecture on the need for the preservation of dignity.”⁷⁶ Moreover, the dancing lamas articulated a critique of British culture during their visit that was recognized, if not by most British observers, at least by other Tibetans. Rinchen Lhamo, a Tibetan woman married to an English diplomat, reported this critique and responded directly to the way the British press had portrayed the visit of the dancing lamas to London. “One writer described them [the dancing lamas] as being frightened

by the marvels of your material culture; but he goes on to say that one of them said you were in danger of being enslaved by your own machines. That is not the remark of a man in fear, but of an acute observer. I wonder the journalist did not see it, but I suppose he was misled by the convention about us being primitive.” Rinchen Lhamo identified this convention as part of a broader pattern of European writing about Tibet that one would now call Orientalism: “It is so much easier to say what is expected than what is true, but contrary to established views.” Her comments were intended to counter what she called the absurd and scandalous things written about Tibet. “We are, like yourselves, a people with a highly developed culture, spiritual, social and material.”⁷⁷

Tibetan culture was not isolated from the world but engaged in a transcultural exchange promoted by British and Tibetan officials, especially F. M. Bailey and Tsarong Shape. Although Bailey’s dispatches to India demonstrate his sensitivity to Tibetan religious beliefs, it was Bailey, as much as Noel, who was responsible for the insertion of culture, sport, and media into Anglo-Tibetan relations. As news of the deaths on Everest reached Lhasa during his diplomatic mission in 1924, Bailey circulated among the Tibetans the British sporting ethos that animated the Everest expeditions. In his diary, Bailey recorded that the Tibetan prime minister offered his condolences.

He said he was very sorry at the death of Mallory and Irvine. Tibetans thought a human life very valuable. It should be used for the benefit of the religion or of one’s government and not wasted on a mountain. I said that our experience was that people who took risks by doing things like climbing mountains, playing polo and football, shooting game were better at their work than people who sat indoors all day which led to drinking and gambling. A few people were killed at these things but the benefit to the others was very great.

The next day, Bailey noted, “Tsarong Shape had all of the Tibetan officers out to practice polo today. A good sign and shows they are keen.” A few days later, “in the afternoon we played polo and all Lhasa was there as I gave them tea.” Tsarong hoped to have his Lhasa team play matches with the British officers in Gyantse.⁷⁸ Although polo had been played for literally thousands of years from Persia to Mongolia, Bailey taught the Tibetans how to “play the game” as the British had been doing since adopting polo in India – or inventing mountaineering in the Alps – during the mid-Victorian decades.⁷⁹

Bailey was also engaged in the interplay of cinema and power in Tibet. In Lhasa in 1924, Bailey showed films in Tsarong Shape’s private screening room: “The King opening Parliament impressed them very much.” Even after the diplomatic controversy over the lamas in 1925, Bailey brought a small movie camera to Gyantse – the city from which the lamas had been taken to England – and filmed the remaining lamas of the Gyantse monastery performing their “devil dance.” Although Bailey thought his own films were “not a success,” he set an example for later British envoys.⁸⁰ In Lhasa in the 1930s, Spencer Chapman regularly showed Rin-Tin-Tin and Charlie Chaplin films, short topical films, and his own home movies, and he often played soccer against a local team he called “Lhasa United.”⁸¹

Tsarong Shape's career also illustrates the extent to which the intercultural encounters of Anglo-Tibetan relations affected Tibetan domestic politics. Tsarong had risen to prominence by saving the life of the Dalai Lama during his flight to India in 1910 and by marrying into the aristocratic Tsarong family, whose name he adopted, in 1913. As a confidant of the Dalai Lama, leader of the military, and master of the mint, Tsarong led the faction in Tibetan politics, centered on military officers, that advocated the "modernization" of Tibet in the early 1920s. Tsarong remodeled the army along British lines, played polo, rode a motorbike, watched Western films, and even asked Bailey about life insurance for himself and his son.⁸² But Tsarong's secularism and imitation of the British brought him into conflict with the monasteries and Buddhist laws. After a fistfight broke out between police and soldiers in 1924, for example, Tsarong inflicted summary justice on the offender by cutting off one of his legs, despite a prohibition against such punishments. As Tsarong explained to his colleagues, he was the commander-in-chief of the Tibetan army and must have certain powers; the commander-in-chief of the British army had every right to deal with such cases, and why shouldn't he follow the same rule, since the Tibetans had introduced British drill instructions and had a desire to follow British rules and regulations?⁸³

Also in 1924, Tsarong, other officers, and Laden La, a Sikkimese Buddhist whom the British sent to Lhasa to train the police force, may have plotted against the monasteries and the Dalai Lama. Melvyn Goldstein suggests that Tsarong's actions in mid-1924 led to his dismissal as commander-in-chief in the spring of 1925. While Goldstein suggests plausible reasons why the Dalai Lama may have delayed his reaction, it is just as plausible that the "dancing lamas" were responsible for the timing of Tsarong's demotion.⁸⁴ The Dalai Lama demoted Tsarong after the performances of the dancing lamas and at the same time as he refused permission for another Everest expedition in April 1925. This is not to argue that the dancing lamas were the only cause of Tsarong's downfall, or that their relationship was merely *post hoc ergo propter hoc*. Rather, ever since Tibetan permission for Everest had been given in the context of Sino-Tibetan hostilities and the need for British weapons, the fate of the Everest expeditions had been inextricably linked to the political fortunes of Tsarong and the military in Tibet.

While Alastair Lamb admits that "it is hard to quantify the consequences of the business of the Tibetan dancers," he adds, "there can be no doubt, however, that it did not help the cause of modernisers in general and Tsarong Shape in particular." Lamb rightly suggests the Bailey mission to Lhasa in 1924 may have heightened the visibility of "modernization" in Tibet and polarized the Tibetan ruling elite. After earlier offenses, the affair of the dancing lamas made the positions of both Tsarong and the Everest expeditions untenable. Even if Tsarong's earlier behavior contributed to his demotion, it does not explain why Anglo-Tibetan relations deteriorated so rapidly in 1925.⁸⁵ Many Tibetans suspected that the performances of the dancing lamas had been organized by the British government. Not only did British *representatives* in Lhasa show films in Tsarong's cinema, play games with his officers, and encourage his reform of a theocratic state, but British *representations* of the dancing lamas in London also appeared to denigrate and exploit Tibetan Buddhism. In both instances, Anglo-Tibetan relations had inter-cultural consequences. Although there had been earlier resistance against the "modernization" of Tibet – the introduction of

a modern police force and army, educational reforms, higher taxes, new roads, telegraphs, and hydroelectric plants – it was not until the performances of the dancing lamas challenged Tibetan religious beliefs and cultural practices that this Tibetan resistance crystallized into direct political opposition.

Yet asymmetrical levels of military development imposed limits on the Tibetan ability to bargain with the British. After a conflict between two monasteries on the Sino-Tibetan border escalated into a wider war in 1930, Tibet again turned to Britain for more weapons and diplomatic assistance with China. Weir visited Lhasa with promises of aid and, “taking advantage of the Tibetan Government’s recent pro-British feeling,” asked for permission for yet another Everest expedition. The Dalai Lama replied: “From our point of view, almost every snowy mountain in Tibet is the seat of the gods and of the guardian deities of the inner religion (i.e. Buddhism), who are very jealous; yet, in deference to the wishes of the British Government and in order that the friendly relations may not be ruptured, permission is hereby granted.”⁸⁶ Although a Sino-Tibetan truce was soon called and the threat eased with renewed civil war in Szechuan, the Tibetan dependence on British weapons was once again abundantly clear. As in 1921, Sino-Tibetan military conflicts in the 1930s gave Tibetans the courage to put aside their religious convictions on the sacredness of mountains. Although the Tibetans placed stringent restrictions on the activities of the expedition, they once again gave permission for the climbing of Mt. Everest as a *quid pro quo* for the embrace of British arms.⁸⁷

In the end, the incident of the dancing lamas of Everest raises questions of power. But how should power be defined? Anglo-Tibetan diplomacy, the discourse of Orientalism, and cinematic representations of Everest – each defined power relations in distinct but related ways. At one level, Anglo-Tibetan relations negotiated the power politics of diplomacy. In exchange for British weapons, Tibet gave permission for British Everest expeditions in 1921 and again in 1932. In 1925, however, when Tibet faced few threats and conserved its stockpile of arms, it was able to deny permission. When Chinese threats reappeared in the early 1930s, “Everest permits now seemed to go with British Missions to Lhasa,” according to Lamb, and were granted as “welcoming gifts” to British envoys.⁸⁸ Since Tibet never became a British colony or client-state, Tibetans were able to resist British demands under certain conditions. Yet Tibetan resistance was limited by Tibet’s ambiguous relations with China, Britain’s differential capability of violence, and Tibet’s own internal politics.

At another level, these limitations on “power politics” suggest the extent to which power was defined more expansively in Anglo-Tibetan intercultural relations. For example, the “modernization” of Tibet encouraged by the British and spearheaded by Tsarong Shape ground to a halt in the mid-1920s when the dancing lamas of Everest tipped the balance of power within Tibet from the military to the monasteries. Yet this dichotomy within Tibet should itself be understood as an intercultural consequence of Anglo-Tibetan relations. The Everest expeditions, the dancing lamas, and British diplomacy in the 1920s were the latest in a series of Anglo-Tibetan encounters, from military clashes in Sikkim, to the Younghusband mission in 1904, that culturally constructed the Tibetan military in opposition to the monasteries.⁸⁹ By the 1920s, some Tibetans may have represented the Tibetan military in terms that had formerly been reserved for the British. Although such associations were by no means inevitable,

they had long-term consequences. The Tibetan military lost elite support and, despite some rearmament, never recovered the position it had enjoyed in the early 1920s. When a resurgent China attempted to reclaim its Tibetan *irredenta* by force in the 1950s, the Tibetan army was too weak to stop it.

In other ways, the Everest expeditions redefined the power of Orientalism, the power to represent the Other, as the possession of *both* British and Tibetans. To be sure, many British observers portrayed Tibetans as objects of Orientalism, most notably in the publicity for the dancing lamas in London. But the dancing lamas were never completely silenced by their publicity. The Dalai Lama and the Rongbuk Lama also negotiated with the British from positions of strength, because their permission and blessings were needed to climb Everest. In addition, many Tibetans watched the Everest expeditions in Tibet in much the same spirit that British audiences watched the performances of the dancing lamas in London, in a kind of Orientalism in reverse. Consider John Morris's description of the Everest expedition's lack of privacy at its Tibetan campsites: "At every camp we were under close observation [by Tibetans] all through the day; not from any sinister motive but out of sheer curiosity. Our situation was like that of the denizens of those so-called native villages who are often a popular feature of international exhibitions."⁹⁰

The power of Orientalism to shape representations of the Other always remained in tension with the more complex Anglo-Tibetan encounter. British bureaucrats cracked a "smile of kindly superiority" at things Oriental, but they earnestly attempted to respect Tibetan religious beliefs. Many climbers struggled to express the sympathy they developed for Tibet, but their language remained Orientalist. Howard Somervell wrote: "Tibetans are not by any means uncivilised, although quite un-Westernized. Both in the towns they live in, and in the organisation of their state, they have a very definite, though characteristically Oriental civilisation." British and Tibetans searched for ways to describe the cross-cultural influences and hybridity of Anglo-Tibetan relations. This unresolved ambivalence about the Other appeared once again as admiration mingled with contempt in the performances of the dancing lamas and the Everest films.⁹¹

The cinema and mass media integrated culture and power in Anglo-Tibetan relations and played the crucial role in transforming the lamas' dances into diplomatic disputes. Ironically, Noel was convinced that his film and the dancing lamas would improve relations between Britain and Tibet.⁹² Noel presumably thought his audience to be the British or Europeans or Americans. But the global reach of early twentieth-century mass media – newspapers, exhibitions, cinemas – extended to remote parts of the world and expanded Noel's audience to include the subjects of his film, the Tibetans. The Dalai Lama read the London papers, and officials from Tibet, Sikkim, and Bhutan watched Noel's films in India. These media enabled the Tibetans, perhaps for the first time, to see themselves as they were seen by others. This is not to say that Tibetans had never been exposed to foreign representations of Tibet, as they must have been, for example, during the Dalai Lama's periods of exile in China or India. But the Everest films were the first record *on film*, and Tibetans responded by vigorously challenging what they saw. Indeed, historians may have seriously underestimated the importance of the cinema and the mass media in disseminating representations and inspiring resistance during the early twentieth century. Tibet banned film crews from the Everest expeditions because access by the media – the right to make

representations – had itself become one of the bargaining chips of diplomacy. Although Tibetans banned filmmakers from Everest, in the 1930s they watched Western films in private. The dancing lamas of Everest thus appear to be an early example of the complex process by which “modern modes of representation (e.g. film and video) have helped to reconstitute colonized subjectivities.”⁹³

The Epic of Everest also demonstrates that film could reconstitute the subject position of the British “colonisers.” Even if the dancing lamas were seen as a source of comedy, Noel was influenced by Tibetan culture. At the end of the film, Noel again highlights the contrast between the scientific West and the mystical East. The purpose of this comparison, however, is to cast doubt on the pretensions of science and to give credibility to the mysticism of Tibet. In the final scenes of the film, Noel anthropomorphizes Mt. Everest into a spiritual, religious force that opposed the British climbers:

To us Everest was but a mountain – a thing of rock and ice and snow. To the Tibetans she was more – she was what they named her. “Chomolungma.” “Goddess Mother of the World.”

Now could it be possible that something more than the physical opposed us in this battle where human strength and western science had broken and failed?

Strangely to memory the words of the Rongbuk Lama come – “The Gods of the Lamas shall deny you White Men the object of your search –”

[shot of the Rongbuk Lama through a window]

Could it be possible that we fought something beyond our knowledge? Could it be, as these mystic peoples say, that this terrible mountain LIVES and is SPIRIT GUARDED?

[shot of clouds blowing over a ridge and a sunset on a peak]

CHOMO-LUNG-MA. GODDESS MOTHER OF THE WORLD.⁹⁴

The film then ends with a time-lapsed shot of Everest in the distance, a plume of clouds trailing off its summit, as shadows lengthen and darkness falls.

The ending of *The Epic of Everest* corresponds to the multiplicitous endings of the affair of the dancing lamas. In diplomatic narratives, the lamas fade into obscurity as the screen fades to black. Orientalist narratives might recognize the ending of the film either as an example of a venerable discourse of a spiritual Tibet versus the materialist West, or as the predictable personification of the melodramatic contrast between the climbers and the Other. But Noel’s engagement with Tibet by the end of the film went deeper. Noel wrote in the *Sunday Express* that he sincerely thought Mt. Everest was alive. Although many British newspapers expressed incredulity at this notion and criticized the film’s ending, the *Yorkshire Post* compared Noel’s beliefs to contemporary British occultism and portrayed his views as uniquely Tibetan in inspiration. Noel persisted in these beliefs for years. If it is possible for men to land on the moon, Noel said in a 1969 interview, anything is possible.⁹⁵

If this representation of Tibetan mysticism persisted well after the affair of the dancing lamas, so, too, did the personal influence of the lamas themselves. Each expedition that went through Tibet to Everest sought an audience with the Rongbuk Lama. His blessing ensured the cooperation of the Sherpas and other Buddhist porters

on whom the expeditions so heavily depended. After meeting the Rongbuk Lama in the 1930s, expedition leader Hugh Rutledge reflected, “We do not know everything in the West; is it possible that we have everything to learn?” Yet Anglo-Tibetan intercultural education remained incomplete at best. When the Rongbuk Lama asked the British climbers to sing in 1938, they sang a hymn and then recited the mantra “Om Mane Padme Hum” to the tune of “God Save the King.” Climber H. W. Tilman wanted the head lama to know that they did not climb “at the instigation of and assisted by the British Government for the sake of national prestige . . . We belonged to a small but select cult who regarded a Himalayan expedition as a means of acquiring merit, beneficial to soul and body, and equivalent to entering a monastery.”⁹⁶ Not the least of the many intercultural ironies of the British Everest expeditions is that when the themes of Everest and national prestige were resurrected in 1953, one of the “conquerors” of Everest was Tenzing Norgay, who had once trained to be a lama and was himself the nephew of the head lama at Rongbuk Monastery.⁹⁷

Notes

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- 1 Program for *The Epic of Everest* (1924), 4, in L/P&S/11/244, British Library, Oriental and India Office Collections, London (hereafter, OIOC). Although only one of the “dancing lamas” was a lama in the literal sense of a senior religious teacher – the rest appear to have been ordinary monks – this article follows the 1920s accounts in referring to the group as a whole as “lamas.”
- 2 Arthur Hirtzel, *Minute*, March 14, 1925, L. D. Wakely to Hirtzel, March 12, 1925, L/P&S/10/778 OIOC. Wakely later saw the film in Wimbledon and found only a few things open to objection. See Wakely, *Minute*, May 27, 1925, L/P&S/10/778, OIOC.
- 3 Walt Unsworth, *Everest* (London, 1991), 151; Gordon T. Stewart, “Tenzing’s Two Wrist-Watches: The Conquest of Everest and Late Imperial Culture in Britain, 1921–1953,” in *Past and Present* (1995): 170–97. See also Peter H. Hansen, “Can the Subaltern Climb? Tenzing, Everest, and Post-Colonial Culture, 1921–1953” (unpublished essay in possession of the author).
- 4 David Reynolds, *Britannia Overruled. British Policy and World Power in the Twentieth Century* (London, 1991), esp. 5–37. For other recent approaches, see Michael J. Hogan and Thomas G. Patterson, eds., *Explaining the History of American Foreign Relations* (Cambridge, 1991); and Walter LaFeber, “The World and the United States,” *American Historical Review* (hereafter *AHR*), 100 (October 1995): 1015–33.
- 5 Alastair Lamb, *Tibet, China and India, 1914–1950. A History of Imperial Diplomacy* (Hertingfordbury, 1989); Amar Kaur Jasbir Singh, *Himalayan Triangle: A Historical Survey of British India’s Relations with Tibet, Sikkim, and Bhutan, 1765–1950* (London, 1988); Premen Addy, *Tibet on the Imperial Chessboard. The Making of British Policy towards Lhasa, 1899–1925* (Calcutta, 1984); and Parshotam Mehra, *The North-Eastern Frontier. A Documentary Survey of the Internecine Rivalry between India, Tibet, and China, Vol. 2: 1914–54* (Delhi, 1980).

- 6 Melvyn C. Goldstein, *A History of Modern Tibet, 1913–1951: The Demise of the Lamaist State* (Berkeley, Calif., 1989). See also W. D. Shakabpa, *Tibet, A Political History* (New Haven, Conn., 1967); and Hugh E. Richardson, *Tibet and Its History*, 2nd edn. (London, 1984).
- 7 Akira Iriye, “Culture and Power: International Relations as Intercultural Relations,” *Diplomatic History*, 3 (1979): 155–78; and Iriye, “The Internationalization of History,” *AHR*, 94 (February 1989): 1–10.
- 8 Edward W. Said, *Orientalism* (1978; rpt. edn., London, 1995), 14–15. See also Peter Bishop, *The Myth of Shangri-La: Tibet, Travel Writing and the Western Creation of Sacred Landscape* (London, 1989); Bishop, *Dreams of Power. Tibetan Buddhism, Western Imagination* (London, 1992); Philip C. Almond, *The British Discovery of Buddhism* (Cambridge, 1988); and Thomas Richards, *The Imperial Archive. Knowledge and the Fantasy of Empire* (London, 1993), 11–44.
- 9 Donald S. Lopez, Jr., ed., *Curators of the Buddha: The Study of Buddhism under Colonialism* (Chicago, 1995), 12; Charles Hallisey, “Roads Taken and Not Taken in the Study of Theravāda Buddhism,” in Lopez, *Curators of the Buddha*, 33. See also the discussion of mimesis and seduction in Vincanne Adams, *Tigers of the Snow and Other Virtual Sherpas: An Ethnography of Himalayan Encounters* (Princeton, N.J., 1996).
- 10 See, for example, Michael Geyer and Charles Bright, “World History in a Global Age,” *AHR*, 100 (October 1995): 1034–60; Gyan Prakash, ed., *After Colonialism: Imperial Histories and Postcolonial Displacements* (Princeton, N.J., 1995); the Forum on subaltern studies in the *AHR*, 99 (December 1994): 1475–1545; and Nicholas B. Dirks, ed., *Colonialism and Culture* (Ann Arbor, Mich., 1992).
- 11 Edward W. Said, *Culture and Imperialism* (New York, 1993). John MacKenzie’s important research on popular culture and imperialism should supplement Said’s approach, but his recent critique of Said exaggerates the incompatibility of “history” and “theory.” John M. MacKenzie, *Orientalism: History, Theory, and the Arts* (Manchester, 1995). See also James Clifford, “On Orientalism,” in Clifford, *The Predicament of Culture: Twentieth-Century Ethnography, Literature, and Art* (Cambridge, Mass., 1988), 255–76; and Carol A. Breckenridge and Peter van der Veer, eds., *Orientalism and the Postcolonial Predicament: Perspectives on South Asia* (Philadelphia, 1993).
- 12 On these exhibitions and ethnographic displays, see, for example, Richard D. Altick, *The Shows of London* (Cambridge, Mass., 1978); Robert W. Rydell, *All the World’s a Fair: Visions of Empire at American International Expositions, 1876–1916* (Chicago, 1984); and Michael T. Bravo, “Ethnological Encounters,” in *Cultures of Natural History*, N. Jardine, J. A. Secord, and E. C. Spary, eds. (Cambridge, 1996), 338–57; David Jenkins, “Object Lessons and Ethnographic Displays: Museum Exhibitions and the Making of American Anthropology,” *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, 36 (1994): 242–70; Annie E. Coombes, *Reinventing Africa: Museums, Material Culture, and Popular Imagination in Late Victorian and Edwardian England* (New Haven, Conn., 1994); Raymond Corbey, “Ethnographic Showcases, 1870–1930,” *Cultural Anthropology*, 8 (1993): 228–69; Mick Gidley, ed., *Representing Others: White Views of Indigenous Peoples* (Exeter, 1992); Elizabeth Edwards, ed., *Anthropology and Photography, 1860–1920* (New Haven, 1992); Paul Greenhalgh, *Ephemeral Vistas: The Exposition Universelles, Great Exhibitions, and World’s Fairs, 1851–1939* (Manchester, 1988), esp. 82–119; John M. MacKenzie, ed. *Imperialism and Popular Culture* (Manchester, 1986), esp. 94–112; Brian Mackrell, *Hariru Wikitoria! An Illustrated History of the Maori Tour of England, 1863* (Auckland, 1985); John M. MacKenzie, *Propaganda and Empire: The Manipulation of British Public Opinion, 1880–1960* (Manchester, 1984), esp. 97–120; William H. Schneider, *An Empire for the Masses: The French Popular Image of Africa, 1870–1900* (Westport, Conn., 1982), esp. 125–51. See also Michael Harbsmeier, “Modernity Observed: Non-Western Traditions of Travel Writing and the Experience of Europe in the Nineteenth Century,” (unpublished essay).
- 13 See David Enrico Omissi, “The Hendon Air Pageant, 1920–37,” in *Popular Imperialism and the Military, 1850–1950*, John M. MacKenzie, ed. (Manchester, 1992), 198–220. In 1922, RAF planes “machine gunned funny fellows in flowing robes” played by other RAF officers. Omissi, 204.

- 14 Tony Bennett, *The Birth of the Museum: History, Theory, Politics* (London, 1995), 59–88; and Bennett, “The Exhibitionary Complex,” *New Formations*, 4 (1988): 73–102. Timothy Mitchell, *Colonising Egypt* (Cambridge, 1988); and Mitchell, “The World as Exhibition,” *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, 31 (1989): 217–36. Donna Haraway, *Primate Visions. Gender, Race, and Nature in the World of Modern Science* (1989; London, 1992), 26–58; and Haraway, “Teddy Bear Patriarchy: Taxidermy in the Garden of Eden, New York City, 1908–1936,” *Social Text*, 11 (1983): 20–64.
- 15 See D. L. LeMahieu, *A Culture for Democracy: Mass Communication and the Cultivated Mind in Britain between the Wars* (Oxford, 1988); and Jeffrey Richards, *The Age of the Dream Palace: Cinema and Society in Britain, 1930–1939* (London, 1984). For recent approaches to history and film, see Robert A. Rosenstone, ed., *Revisioning History: Film and the Construction of a New Past* (Princeton, N. J., 1994); John E. O’Connor, ed., *Image as Artifact: The Historical Analysis of Film and Television* (Malabar, Fl., 1990); and the Forum on film in the *AHR*, 93 (December 1988): 1173–1227. For related background, see Philip M. Taylor, “Back to the Future? Integrating the Press and Media into the History of International Relations,” *Historical Journal of Film, Radio and Television*, 14 (1994): 321–29; Beau Riffenburgh, *The Myth of the Explorer: The Press, Sensationalism, and Geographical Discovery* (Oxford, 1994); MacKenzie, *Propaganda and Empire*, esp. 40–120; and Philip M. Taylor, *The Projection of Britain: British Overseas Publicity and Propaganda, 1919–1939* (Cambridge, 1981).
- 16 Since lamas and emperors competed on cosmological as well as “political” grounds, for claims to spiritual as well as temporal authority, James Hevia suggests “it may be necessary to reconceptualize sovereignty in terms other than those which map ethnicity and culture over territory.” See Hevia, “Lamas, Emperors, and Rituals: Political Implications in Qing Imperial Ceremonies,” *Journal of the International Association of Buddhist Studies*, 16 (1993): 243–78.
- 17 On the Younghusband mission, see, for example, Peter Fleming, *Bayonets to Lhasa* (London, 1961); and works by Alastair Lamb and Parshotam Mehra. For a Tibetan account of an Anglo-Tibetan military clash in Sikkim in 1888, see Michael Aris, “Himalayan Encounters,” in *Tibet et Himalaya. Histoire et sociétés: En hommage à Alexander W. Macdonald*, Samten Karmay and Philippe Sagant, eds. (Paris, 1996). On the early negotiations to climb Everest, see Peter H. Hansen, “Vertical Boundaries, National Identities: British Mountaineering on the Frontiers of Europe and the Empire, 1868–1914,” *Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History*, 24 (1996): 48–71.
- 18 See Alastair Lamb, *British India and Tibet, 1766–1910* (London, 1986); Lamb, *The McMahon Line: A Study in the Relations between India, China and Tibet, 1904–1914*, 2 vols. (London, 1966); Charles Bell, *Portrait of the Dalai Lama* (London, 1946); and Goldstein, *History of Modern Tibet*, 41–89. For accounts by British diplomats who served in Tachienlu and Chengtu, see Eric Teichman, *Travels of a Consular Officer in Eastern Tibet* (Cambridge, 1922); and Louis Magrath King, *China in Turmoil* (London, 1927). On strains between the military and the monasteries, see Goldstein, *History of Modern Tibet*, 77–88.
- 19 T. H. Holdich to Secretary of State for India, December 19, 1918, L/P&S/10/777, OIOC, and Add. MSS 63119, fol. 17, British Library, London (hereafter BL); see also Montagu to Viceroy, January 17, 1919, L/P&S/10/777, OIOC. J. E. Shuckburgh, Minute, April 25, 1919, L/P&S/10/777, OIOC. Renewed negotiations with China in 1919 were reputedly cancelled by the Chinese as a result of Japanese pressure. See Clive Christie, “Great Britain, China and the Status of Tibet, 1914–21,” *Modern Asian Studies*, 10 (1976): 481–508; and Ira Klein, “British Imperialism in Decline. Tibet, 1914–21,” *The Historian*, 34 (1971): 100–15.
- 20 See Shuckburgh, Minutes of May 6, 1920, and May 10, 1920, L/P&S/10/777, OIOC. British diplomats were reluctant to break the Anglo-Russian agreement of 1907 until it was clear the Bolsheviks would defeat the White Russians; they considered the treaty “lapsed” in March 1920. Christie, “Great Britain, China and the Status of Tibet,” 499. On Bell and the Kansu mission, see Lamb, *Tibet, China and India*, 110–13; and letters to Bell from various Tibetan Officials and Bell to India, February 21, 1921, MSS Eur. F. 80157, 202, OIOC.
- 21 Younghusband in the *Times*, June 1, 1920; Patrick French, *Younghusband The Last Great Imperial Adventurer* (London, 1994), 329. On Howard-Bury’s negotiations, see Add. MSS 63121,

- fols. 97–101, 111, 113, 137, BL; T. S. Blakeney, “The First Steps toward Mount Everest,” *Alpine Journal*, 76 (1971): 43–69; Unsworth, *Everest*, 11–29; and correspondence in EE/1/8/1–9, Royal Geographical Society Archives (hereafter, RGSA).
- 22 Bell quoted in Viceroy to India Office, telegram, July 24, 1920, L/P&S/10/777, OIOC. Before World War I, Bell had been a proponent of extending British influence and military power into Tibet. After the Montagu Declaration of 1917, which promised eventual Indian independence, Bell became an advocate of strengthening Tibetan independence. See C. J. Christie, “Sir Charles Bell: A Memoir,” *Asian Affairs*, 64 (1977): 48–62.
- 23 Bell, *Portrait of the Dalai Lama*, 243, 245. The India Office allowed Bell to choose when to ask for permission. See also Bell to Younghusband, December 24, 1920, and February 16, 1921, EE 1/8/10, 1/16/3, RGSA.
- 24 Bell to India, telegram, December 10, 1920; Younghusband to Dalai Lama, January 20, 1921, L/P&S/10/777, OIOC. On the Tibetan context, see Goldstein, *Modern History of Tibet*, 89–110. See also Bell to India, February 21, 1921; India to Bell, May 19, 1921; Bell’s final report on the Lhasa Mission, November 29, 1921; and Bell to Tibetan Government, December 12, 1921, MSS Eur. F. 80/202, 204–06, OIOC. Bell had advocated sending arms to Tibet for years. On Bell’s visit to Lhasa and on the arms question generally, see Charles Bell, *Tibet, Past and Present* (Oxford, 1924), 170–205; Lamb, *Tibet, China and India*, 110–28; Goldstein, *History of Modern Tibet*, esp. 93–96; L/P&S/10/716–718, and L/P&S/18/B344, OIOC. [Also see McKay, A. C., “The Cinderella of the Foreign Service”, in *South Asia Research*, 12.2., pp. 119–34.]
- 25 Bell to Cater, March 8, 1921, L/P&S/10/777, OIOC. See also C. H. D. Ryder (Surveyor General of India) to Younghusband, March 29, 1921, Add. MSS 63121, fol. 105, BL.
- 26 On the 1921 expedition in general, see C. K. Howard-Bury, *Mount Everest. The Reconnaissance* (London, 1921), quote, 175; Unsworth, *Everest*, 30–68; Tom Holzel and Andrey Salkeld, *First on Everest: The Mystery of Mallory and Irvine* (New York, 1986), 33–81; and T. S. Blakeney, “A. R. Hinks and the First Everest Expedition in 1921,” *Geographical Journal*, 136 (1970): 333–43. Mallory reported early on that the party had shot gazelle, sheep, and a goose. George Mallory to Ruth Mallory, June 8, 1921, FIGM (Mallory Papers, Old Library), Magdalene College, Cambridge.
- 27 Representatives of Tedong Depon of Tengri Jong to the Tibet Council, undated [1921]; and Prime Minister of Tibet to Bell, September 28, 1921, both quoted in Bailey to India, January 2, 1922. L/P&S/10/777, OIOC. Several translations of the prime minister’s letter were made. See also Viceroy to London, January 10, 1922, MSS Eur. E. 238/11, OIOC.
- 28 Bailey to Younghusband, December 4, 1921, EE 1/20/13, RGSA. Younghusband to Wakely, February 13, 1922, L/P&S/10/777, OIOC. See also Bailey to Younghusband, January 10, 1922, EE 1/20/26, RGSA, in which Bailey criticized Bell for not taking a stronger stand with the Tibetans; and Arthur Swinson, *Beyond the Frontiers: The Biography of Colonel F. M. Bailey, Explorer and Special Agent* (London, 1971).
- 29 Lönchen Shokang, Prime Minister of Tibet, to Bailey, January 26, 1923, L/P&S/10/777, OIOC. Geology itself was not the problem for the British, as another geologist, Henry Hayden, was given permission to wander in Tibet in 1922; the British government did not want to offend the Tibetans regarding Everest. See London to Viceroy, December 24, 1923, MSS Eur. E. 238/12, OIOC. Compare Unsworth, *Everest*, 75. On the 1922 expedition, see C. G. Bruce, *The Assault on Mount Everest, 1922* (London, 1923); Unsworth, *Everest*, 69–99; Holtzel and Salkeld, *First on Everest*, 88–132.
- 30 On the Rongbuk Lama, Ngawang Tenzing Norbu Sangbu (1867–1940), aka Zatul Rinpoche, see Barbara Nimri Aziz, *Tibetan Frontier Families: Reflections of Three Generations from D’ing-ri* (New Delhi, 1978), 209–11; and Sherry B. Ortner, *High Religion: A Cultural and Political History of Sherpa Buddhism* (Princeton, N.J., 1989), 130–35, 178–80.
- 31 Bruce, *Assault on Mount Everest*, 45–47. For other accounts, see George Ingle Finch, *The Making of a Mountaineer* (1924; rpt. edn., Bristol, 1988), 290–91; Francis Younghusband, *Epic of Mount Everest* (London, 1926), 105–06; J. B. L. Noel, *Through Tibet to Everest* (London, 1927), 141–47; John Morris, *Hired to kill* (London, 1960), 165–67.
- 32 Alexander W. Macdonald, “The Lama and the General,” *Kailash: A Journal of Himalayan Studies*, 1 (1973): 230, which includes passages from the lama’s autobiography in English

- and Tibetan. See also another translation of these passages in W. H. Murray, *The Story of Everest*, 4th rev. edn. [November 1953] (London, 1953), 208–09.
- 33 “Orientalism depends for its strategy on this flexible *positional* superiority, which puts the Westerner in a whole series of possible relationships with the Orient without ever losing him the relative upper hand.” Said, *Orientalism*, 7.
- 34 Bruce, *Assault on Mount Everest*, 47. Some visitors reveled in the identity of reincarnation as a badge of alienation from their home culture. See Bishop, *Myth of Shangri-La*, 229. Lama-patron and other relationships were negotiated through such rituals, not prescribed by them. See Hevia, “Lamas, Emperors, and Rituals.” For an account of the role of the monasteries in negotiating “legitimacy” amid the contradictions between egalitarianism and hierarchy in Sherpa society, see Ortner, *High Religion*.
- 35 “Mount Everest Expedition,” EE/1/12/1, RGSA; and Younghusband in RGS Circular, January, 1921, Add. MSS 63119, fol. 18, BL. Younghusband also told the viceroy that the expedition would train officers and civil servants for the frontier. Younghusband to Chelmsford, February 17, 1921, MSS Eur. E. 264116, OIOC.
- 36 *Times*, January 28, 1924. The *Times* editorial the same day echoed Bruce’s theme of pilgrimage. Noel expanded on pilgrimage as a metaphor in *Through Tibet to Everest*, 140–47. Years later, Howard-Bury suggested that Bell had obtained permission for “a pilgrimage to Everest” from the Dalai Lama. See Howard-Bury to Blakeney, October 3, 1960, Add. MSS 63119, fol. 45, BL. This is probably Bruce’s comment reattributed to the Dalai Lama since it does not accord with Bell’s account of what he told the Dalai Lama. See note 23, above.
- 37 On Tibetan mountain pilgrimages, see Rinchen Lhamo [Mrs. Louis King], *We Tibetans* (London, 1926), 65–66; and G. A. Combe, *A Tibetan on Tibet* (London, 1926), 166–72. Some visitors to the Himalayas did mimic Tibetan pilgrimages and circumambulate mountains, especially Kailas. See Charles Allen, *A Mountain in Tibet: The Search for Mount Kailas and the Sources of the Great Rivers of India* (London, 1982). The two attitudes of conquest and devotion toward mountains both have a long history. See Simon Schama, *Landscape and Memory* (New York, 1995), esp. 385–513.
- 38 On many of these films, see Kevin Brownlow, *The War, the West, and the Wilderness* (London, 1979), which includes a discussion of Noel’s films, 452–64. See also David L. Clark, “Capt. Noel’s 1922 Conquest of Everest,” *American Cinematographer*, 71 (August 1990): 36–40. On Ponting’s antarctic films and other films of fact before and after the war, see Rachael Low, *The History of the British Film, 1906–1914* (London, 1949), 146–65; and Low, *The History of the British Film, 1918–1929* (London, 1971), 287–90. They were not called “documentaries” until the late 1920s.
- 39 For a broad range of similar films on early cross-cultural contacts, see Pierre-L. Jordan, *Cinéma Kino: Premier Contact – Premier Regard, First Contact – First Look, Erster Kontakt – Erster Blick* (Marseilles, 1992). These were not often self-consciously “ethnographic” in focus. Rather, these films were in the tradition of scenics, panoramas, travelogues, and expedition films. See Kari G. Heider, *Ethnographic Film* (Austin, Tex., 1976); and Peter Loizos, *Innovation in Ethnographic Film: From Innocence to Self-Consciousness, 1955–85* (Chicago, 1993). For earlier traditions in photography, see James R. Ryan, “Imperial Landscapes: Photography, Geography; and British Overseas Exploration, 1858–1872,” in *Geography and Imperialism, 1820–1940*, Morag Bell, Robin Butlin, and Michael Heffernan, eds. (Manchester, 1995), 53–79.
- 40 *Climbing Mount Everest* (1922). See the viewing copy at the National Film and Television Archive, British Film Institute, London (hereafter, NFTVA). T. H. Somervell, *After Everest: The Experiences of a Mountaineer and Medical Missionary* (London, 1936), 78. The ceremonies at Rongbuk Monastery in 1924 reminded Somervell, a Quaker, of the magic, ritual, and priestcraft of a Roman Catholic service: “in short, East and West are not as far apart as some people think,” *After Everest*, 115.
- 41 See Erik Barnouw, *Documentary: A History of the Non-Fiction Film*, 2d rev. edn. (New York, 1993); Bill Nichols, *Representing Reality: Issues and Concepts in Documentary* (Bloomington, Ind., 1991); Paula Rabinowitz, *They Must Be Represented: The Politics of Documentary* (London, 1994); Lewis Jacobs, ed., *The Documentary Tradition*, 2d edn. (New York, 1979).

- 42 *Climbing Mount Everest*, NFTVA. See Noel, *Through Tibet to Everest*, 156–59; Brownlow, *War, the West, and the Wilderness*, 456–59; and Holtzel and Salkeld, *First on Everest*, 95, 133, 143.
- 43 For the cost of the expeditions, see Add. MSS 63120, fol. 61, BL; Unsworth, *Everest*, 101. The *Times* would have paid an additional £1,000 if the expedition had reached the summit. Syndication rights were always the largest source of support for the expeditions, but such press arrangements caused trouble in India in the 1920s. See L/P&S/10/778 and MSS Eur. E. 238/10, OIOC; and EE 6/1/20–26, RGSA. Surviving newsreels show Noel with his cameras and the expedition's porters in Darjeeling. See G1060–1924, and G1078–1924, British Pathé News Collection, London.
- 44 *Weekly Dispatch*, February 17, 1924; *Bioscope*, February 21, 1924, Unsworth, *Everest*, 146.
- 45 On the 1924 expedition, see E. F. Norton, *The Fight for Everest: 1924* (London, 1925); Unsworth, *Everest*, 107–41; Holtzel and Salkeld, *First on Everest*, 179–252. On the Citroën tractor, see Unsworth, *Everest*, 148–49; on the Everest stamp, see *Evening Standard*, February 13, 1924, and many related stories early in 1924 in EE/41(b), RGSA.
- 46 See *The Film Renter and Moving Picture News*, March 8, 1924, in which Noel compares his plans to *The Covered Wagon* (1923); and Unsworth, *Everest*, 149. Lowell Thomas claimed to be the first to have used “live prologues” before his Lawrence of Arabia films, although there were earlier examples. For this and a discussion of *The Covered Wagon*, including a photograph of the Arapahoes, see Brownlow, *War, the West, and the Wilderness*, 378, 447. See also Graham Dawson, *Soldier Heroes: British Adventure, Empire and the Imagining of Masculinities* (London, 1994). For related discussion of *The Thief of Bagdad* (1924), see Gillian B. Anderson, *Music for Silent Films, 1894–1929: A Guide* (Washington, D.C., 1988), xvii–xviii, xxxix–xli. For related contexts, see Charles Musser, *High-Class Moving Pictures: Lyman H. Howe and the Forgotten Era of Traveling Exhibition, 1880–1920* (Princeton, N.J., 1991); and Hiroshi Komatsu and Charles Musser, “Benshi Search,” *Wide Angle*, 9 (1987): 72–90.
- 47 See William Montgomery McGovern, *To Lhasa in Disguise: A Secret Expedition through Mysterious Tibet* (London, 1924); and his film *Mysterious Tibet*. One review thought McGovern's film covered the same ground but was not as good as Noel's *Climbing Mount Everest*; see *Nation and Athenaeum*, January 12, 1924. Alexandra David-Neel also visited Lhasa surreptitiously in 1924. See David-Neel, *My Journey to Lhasa* (London, 1927). See also Bishop, *Myth of Shangri-La*. For another “expedition” film in 1925, see Dean Rapp and Charles W. Weber, “British Film, Empire and Society in the Twenties: The ‘Livingstone’ Film, 1923–1925,” *Historical Journal of Film, Radio and Television*, 9 (1989): 3–17, which recreated Livingstone's life on location in Africa and claimed to be the first British film to use Africans as actors.
- 48 On the Wembley dancers, see L/P&S/11/244, OIOC; and *Hansard Parliamentary Debates* (Commons), 5th ser., vol. 170, March 10, 1924, col. 1890. An Everest exhibit also appeared in the India section at Wembley. See EE/31/1, RGSA; and Spencer to Bruce, May 3, 1924, Add. MSS 631191 fol. 63, BL. On the empire exhibition, see MacKenzie, *Propaganda and Empire*; and Greenhaigh, *Ephemeral Vistas*.
- 49 See Bailey to Parsons, November 25, 1924, and Bailey to Latimer, October 20/21, 1924, L/P&S/11/244, OIOC; and Lamb, *Tibet, China and India*, 160. On the visit of the Tibetan boys, see Goldstein, *Modern History of Tibet*, 158–62; and Tsering Shakya, “Making the Great Game Players: Tibetan Students in Britain between 1913 and 1917,” *Tibetan Review*, 21 (January 1986): 9–14, 20.
- 50 Bailey to Hinks, November 18, 1924, EE/24/2, RGSA; L/P&S/10/778, OIOC; and Unsworth, *Everest*, 150. Bailey to Hinks, November 25, 1924, EE/24/2/2, RGSA, and L/P&S/11/244, OIOC.
- 51 G1143–1924, *Epic of Everest*, British Pathé News Collection, London; *Daily News*, November 29, 1924; *Daily Chronicle*, November 28, 1924. Bailey noted: “It is of course quite untrue that there was any secrecy after they reached India, nor that they came in bales of anything.” F. M. Bailey to Florence Bailey, January 1, 1925, MSS Eur. F. 157/185, OIOC.
- 52 *Daily Sketch*, December 2, 1924; *Daily Chronicle*, November 28, 1924; *Times*, December 17, 1924. This is not to say, of course, that we can infer from these reports that the lamas

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- actually thought they were looking at the “gods of the British.” For a discussion of related issues, see the debates between Gananath Obeyesekere, *The Apotheosis of Captain Cook: European Mythmaking in the Pacific* (Princeton, N.J., 1992); and Marshall Sahlins, *How “Natives” Think: About Captain Cook, For Example* (Chicago, 1995).
- 53 Almond, *British Discovery of Buddhism*; and Lopez, *Curators of the Buddha*. See, for example, Laurence Austine Waddell, *The Buddhism of Tibet; or, Lamaism* (London, 1895), based on research among Tibetan Buddhists in Sikkim. On Waddell, see Lopez, 259–63. For related British contexts, see Alex Owen, *The Darkened Room: Women, Power, and Spiritualism in Late Nineteenth Century England* (London, 1989); and Janet Oppenheim, *The Other World: Spiritualism and Psychical Research in England, 1850–1914* (Cambridge, 1985).
- 54 French, *Younghusband*, 338. McGovern (see note 47, above) had been a member of the British Buddhist mission. See also L/P&S/10/1013, OIOC.
- 55 *Sunday Express*, November 23, 1924; *The Referee*, November 30, 1924; *Daily Mirror*, December 2, 1924.
- 56 Stories on the dancing lamas appeared in nearly every paper on December 2, 1924. For a book of newscuttings on the film and the lamas, see EE/41(b), RGSA. For passages quoted on the lamas, see *Daily Express*, December 2, 1924; and, for the Sherpa, see *Daily News*, December 2, 1924.
- 57 For the camel, see *Children’s Newspaper*, December 20, 1924; and *Graphic*, December 27, 1924. For the sea lions, see *Daily Mirror*, December 4, 1924. On related children’s themes, see the *Daily Mail*, December 16, 1924; and *The Lady*, December 18, 1924.
- 58 See identical passages in *Bioscope*, *Cinema*, *Film Renter*, and, *Kinematograph*, on November 6, 1924, EE/41(b), RGSA.
- 59 *Cinema*, December 18, 1924; *Bioscope*, December 18, 1924; *British Journal of Photography*, December 19, 1924.
- 60 *Epic of Everest*. See the viewing copy at NFTVA. Such contrasts were staple representations of Tibet. See Bishop, *Dreams of Power*, 38. In earlier exhibitions, male “natives” were usually exhibited in wrestling matches, baggage races, mock battles, and military exercises, while female “natives” were shown dancing and in domestic settings. These “traditions” may have reinforced British representations of the dancing lama’s effeminacy. When male “natives” had danced before, it was usually identified as a “war dance.” See, for example, Coombes, *Reinventing Africa*, 97–98, 205–09; and Schneider, *Empire for the Masses*, 141–44.
- 61 *Epic of Everest*, NFTVA. The film has not enjoyed long-term critical success. See Low, *History of the British Film, 1918–1929*, 33.
- 62 Until the dancers appeared in London, the unauthorized journeys were the main points of contention in the autumn of 1924. See Bailey to India, September 2, 1924, and October 16, 1924, L/P&S/10/778, OIOC.
- 63 See Porter to Hose, December 1, 1924, L/P&S/11/244, OIOC; Noel to Hinks, December 6, 1924, quoted in Unsworth, *Everest*, 150, and unnumbered letter with EE 31/4/12, RGSA; Hinks to Noel, December 8, 1924, EE 31/4/12, RGSA; and Hinks to Bailey, December 8, 1924, EE 24/2/4, RGSA; and L/P&S/10/778, OIOC.
- 64 See Stills, Posters and Designs Collection, British Film Institute. The “lice-eating” scene is not in the viewing copy at NFTVA. This still resembles some descriptions of the scene, and its human-primate image is significant even if it does not show the “lice eating” itself. For a discussion of similar human-primate representations, see Haraway, *Primate Visions*.
- 65 Hinks to Bailey, December 16, 1924, EE 24/2/5, RGSA; and L/P&S/10/778, OIOC. It is unclear what kind of dances the lamas did perform on stage.
- 66 Bailey to Hinks, January 1, 1925, EE 24/2/6, RGSA; L/P&S/10/778, OIOC; Add. MSS 63119, fol. 80, BL; and Unsworth, *Everest*, 151. Tsarong quoted in draft of Bailey to Parsons, January 26, 1925, MSS Eur. F. 1571290, OIOC; compare the final version in L/P&S/10/778, OIOC. Bell had applied such pressure before. See Christie, “Sir Charles Bell,” 52.
- 67 Prime Minister of Tibet to Bailey, April 12, 1925, L/P&S/10/778, OIOC; EE 2716113, RGSA; and Unsworth, *Everest*, 151–52.
- 68 Noel to Hinks, May 22, 1925, quoted in Unsworth, *Everest*, 1571 and in EE 27/7/16, EE 34/4/24, RGSA. Hinks to Wakely, May 28, 1925, EE 27/6/10, RGSA; and L/P&S/10/778, OIOC; see also Unsworth, *Everest*, 153–55.

- 69 D. T. Montheath, *Minute*, July 8, 1925, L/P&S/10/778, OIOC; see also Hinks to Under-Secretary of State for India, July 1, 1925, EE 27/6/15, RGSA; L/P&S/10/778, OIOC. India to London, August 4, 1925, and Garrett to Mt. Everest Committee, September 22, 1925, EE 27/6/16, RGSA; and L/P&S/10/778, OIOC; Unsworth, *Everest*, 153–55. See also Bailey to India, August 26, 1925, and Wakely to Hinks, October 20, 1925, L/P&S/10/778, OIOC; EE 27/6/18, RGSA; Add. MSS 63120, fols. 5–6, BL.
- 70 See L. Birley, Chief Secretary to Government of Bengal, to Foreign and Political Department, Calcutta, August 20, 1925; D. Macdonald to Bailey, August 18, 1925; S. W. Laden La to Bailey, August 13, 1925, all in L/P&S/10/778, OIOC. In a later book, Macdonald reasserts the lamas' authenticity as real monks but makes no mention of the controversy. David Macdonald, *Twenty Years in Tibet* (Philadelphia, 1938), 132.
- 71 Hinks to Under-Secretary of State for India, November 5, 1925, EE 27/6/19; EE 27/7/34, RGSA; and L/P&S/10/778, OIOC; Unsworth, *Everest*, 150, 156, 157. See also Swinson, *Beyond the Frontiers*, 220. Many officers, including Younghusband, Bruce, Noel, and C. G. Rawling, shared Bailey's pre-war ambition to climb Everest. See Hansen, "Vertical Boundaries, National Identities." No evidence indicates that Bailey was interested in climbing Everest in the 1920s.
- 72 Weir to Hinks, July 26, 1931, EE 44/5, RGSA. In 1926, General Bruce sounded out officials in India – as Lt.-Col. Howard-Bury had done in 1921 – and was told prospects were "almost nil." Bray to Bailey, March 23, 1926, L/P&S/10/778, OIOC. Efforts to seek permission remained in abeyance until Weir's mission was sent to counter the reassertion of Chinese influence in Tibet, which began after Nationalists under Chiang Kai-shek gained control in China. See L/P&S/12/4242, and L/P&S/12/4263, OIOC.
- 73 Mason to Hinks, October 30, 1929; Mason, Kenneth, Corr. 1921–30, RGSA. See also the scathing review of Noel's book in *Alpine Journal*, 39 (1927): 366–68.
- 74 Noel, *Through Tibet to Everest*, 86. On Mrs. Noel as a psychic, see Macdonald, *Twenty Years in Tibet*, 299–301. For Noel's chapter on Tibetan customs, see *Through Tibet to Everest*, esp. 63–86; see also Sybille Noel, *The Magic Bird of Chomo-Lung-Ma: Tales of Mount Everest, the Turquoise Peak* (Garden City, N.Y., 1931).
- 75 For Noel's later plans, see Hinks to Noel, July 31, 1925, EE/31/4/25, RGSA; Noel to Hinks, December 7, 1925, EE 31/4/26, RGSA; and Wakely to Gaselee (Foreign Office), January 24, 1928, L/P&S/10/778, OIOC. For additional German and American proposals, see L/P&S/12/4275, OIOC; for Noel's North American tour, see Brownlow, *War, the West, and the Wilderness*, 463.
- 76 *Morning Post*, December 17, 1924. This scene took place during the lamas' visit to the Houses of Parliament. They later visited the Army and Navy Store, as well as a Punch and Judy show. See *Evening Standard*, December 16, 1924; and a photograph in *Daily Sketch*, December 17, 1924.
- 77 Rinchen Lhamo, *We Tibetans*, 95–96. For an example of the report she was responding to, see the *Times*, December 17, 1924.
- 78 Bailey, Lhasa Diary, August 1, 2, and 6, 1924, MSS Eur. F. 157/214A, OIOC. Bailey encouraged the Tibetans to "give good pay and rank to the boys they had sent to Rugby so that parents would see that the Government appreciated this education . . . That is what we did in England." Lhasa Diary, August 8, 1924. On Tsarong's plans to play polo in Gyantse, see Bailey to India, October 28, 1924, L/P&S/10/1113, OIOC.
- 79 See Peter H. Hansen, "Albert Smith, the Alpine Club, and the Invention of Mountaineering in Mid-Victorian Britain," *Journal of British Studies*, 34 (1995): 300–24. The history of polo is less well developed. It was adopted by British officers in the Indian army and imported into Britain between the 1850s and the 1870s. See Richard Holt, *Sport and the British: A Modern History* (Oxford, 1989), 209–10.
- 80 Bailey, Lhasa Diary, July 30, 1924, MSS Eur. F. 157/214; and Bailey to Florence Bailey, August 1, 1924, MSS Eur. F. 157/184, OIOC. On his Gyantse films, see Bailey to Florence Bailey, February 10, 1925, and June 9, 1925, MSS Eur. F. 157/185, OIOC. Bell watched films in Tsarong Shape's cinema as early as 1920–1921. Bell also emphasizes that Tibetan clerks in the British Trade Agency at Gyantse were taught to play polo by British officers and Indian soldiers. Charles Bell, *The People of Tibet* (Oxford, 1928), 263.

- 81 F. Spencer Chapman, *Lhasa, the Holy City* (London, 1938), 247–55. The Tibetan soccer team never scored a goal; 269–71. The NFTVA also holds films made by British diplomats in Tibet, including F. M. Bailey, Charles Bell, Spencer Chapman, Basil Gould, James Guthrie, and George Sherriff. See also Peter H. Hansen, “Tibet and the Cinema in the Early Twentieth Century” (unpublished essay in the possession of the author).
- 82 Tsarong was born in 1885 into a peasant family and was known as Chensal (or Jensey) Namgang, before 1913, when he married into the Tsarong family and took the name Dasang Dadul Tsarong. After serving as commander-in-chief, Tsarong became a prominent trader with Mongolia, India, China, Japan, and France. He died in 1959 in a Lhasa prison after the Chinese repression. See Goldstein, *History of Modern Tibet*, 52, 66; and Rinchen Dolma Taring, *Daughter of Tibet* (London, 1970), 18–20, 24, 74, 261, the memoir of one of Tsarong’s youngest wives, who later married Jigme Taring. On Tsarong’s adoption of “Western” habits, see Bailey’s various reports; for his request for life insurance, see Bailey, *Lhasa Diary*, August 14, 1924, MSS Eur. F. 157/214A, OIOC.
- 83 For Tsarong’s views, see Goldstein, *History of Modern Tibet*, 128.
- 84 For the plots, see Goldstein, *History of Modern Tibet*, 121–38; and Lamb, *Tibet, China and India*, 161–62; and Williamson to Bailey, April 10, 1925, April 21, 1925, and April 28, 1925, L/P&S/10/1088, OIOC. For the demotion, see Goldstein, *History of Modern Tibet*, 133. It is significant that despite this demotion, Tsarong remained until 1930 a member of the Kashag, the governing cabinet of four Shapes. For the political organization of Tibet, see Goldstein, 6–36. The ambiguous position of the “native” intermediaries who represented the British, such as Laden La or Norbhu Döndup, deserves further study.
- 85 Lamb, *Tibet, China and India*, 161, 159. Many explanations for the breakdown in relations are excessively general. See, for example, Singh, *Himalayan Triangle*, 94.
- 86 Dalai Lama to Weir, July 8, 1932, L/P&S/12/4242, OIOC. See also Weir to India, July 27, 1932, and Walton to Hinks, August 30, 1932, EE/44/5, RGSA; and L/P&S/12/4242, OIOC. On the Sino-Tibetan context of Weir’s missions to Lhasa, see Lamb, *Tibet, China and India*, 177–213; and Singh, *Himalayan Triangle*, 95–101. The Dalai Lama died in 1933, and Tibet was ruled by regents into the late 1940s.
- 87 The Everest expeditions continued to offend the Tibetans in the 1930s. See Williamson to India, October 2, 1933, L/P&S/12/4242, OIOC; and Add. MSS 63120, fols. 24–29, BL.
- 88 Lamb, *Tibet, China and India*, 272.
- 89 By the mid-1920s, the conflict between the military and the monasteries was well advanced. See Lamb, *Tibet, China and India*, 157–58.
- 90 Morris, *Hired to Kill*, 163. Morris was a Gurkha officer with the expeditions in 1922 and 1936. For other varieties of “Orientalism,” see Stefan Tanaka, *Japan’s Orient: Rendering Past into History* (Berkeley, Calif., 1993); and Robert H. Sharf, “The Zen of Japanese Nationalism,” in Lopez, *Curators of the Buddha*, 107–60, in which Japanese representations of Zen Buddhism were used to construct Japaneseness (*nihonjinron*) during Japan’s rise as a colonial power.
- 91 Somervell, *After Everest*, 47. See also Somervell’s chapter “Tibetan Culture” in Bruce, *Assault on Mount Everest*, 313–18. See also the dilemmas faced by contemporary anthropologists in Henrika Kuklick, *The Savage Within: The Social History of British Anthropology, 1885–1945* (Cambridge, 1991). For related discussions of ambivalence, see Homi K. Bhabha, *The Location of Culture* (London, 1994).
- 92 Noel to Hinks, June 26, 1925, EE/27/7/27, RGSA; L/P&S/10/778, OIOC.
- 93 Talal Asad, “From the History of Colonial Anthropology to the Anthropology of Western Hegemony,” in *Colonial Situations: Essays on the Contextualization of Ethnographic Knowledge*, George W. Stocking, Jr., ed. (Madison, Wis., 1991), 323, commenting on the article by Terrence Turner in the same volume, 285–313. See also the issues raised in Jane Desmond, “Ethnography, Orientalism and the Avant-Garde Film,” *Visual Anthropology*, 4 (1991): 147–60; Trinh T. Minh-Ha, *Framer Framed* (New York, 1992); Peter Ian Crawford and David Turton, *Film as Ethnography* (Manchester, 1992); and Rey Chow, *Primitive Passions: Visuality, Sexuality, Ethnography and Contemporary Chinese Cinema* (New York, 1995).
- 94 *Epic of Everest*, NFTVA.
- 95 John Noel, “Is Mount Everest Alive? Eerie Sight,” *Sunday Express*, December 28, 1924. See also the program to *Epic of Everest*, 6, L/P&S/11/244, OIOC; “Everest Devils, Yorkshire

- Post*, December 29, 1924. For contemporary criticisms of the film's ending, see *Sunday Herald*, December 14, 1924; *Observer*, December 14, 1924; *The Nation*, December 20, 1924; *Illustrated London News*, December 27, 1924; *Time and Tide*, December 21, 1924; and *The Star*, December 29, 1924. For John Noel's 1969 interview, and similar comments by Noel Odell, listen to Recording T35309, National Sound Archives, BL.
- 96 Hugh Ruttledge, *Everest: The Unfinished Adventure* (London, 1937), 77; H. W. Tilman, *Everest, 1938* (London, 1948), 98. Ruttledge was leader of the expeditions in 1933 and 1936, Tilman in 1938. See also Ruttledge's sometimes inaccurate obituary of the Rongbuk Lama in *Himalayan Journal*, 17 (1952): 159–60; and the amateur Everest films from the 1930s expeditions by Percy Wyn-Harris, E. O. Shebbeare, and Hugh Ruttledge in NFTVA.
- 97 One of Tenzing Norgay's maternal uncles was Zatul Rinpoche (Ngawang Tenzing Norbu), the Rongbuk Lama who met General Bruce. His successor, Tushi Rinpoche (Tr'ül-zhig), also claimed Tenzing Norgay as a relative. See Tenzing Norgay, *Man of Everest: The Autobiography of Tenzing Told to James Ramsay Ullman* (London, 1955), 35–36; and Aziz, *Tibetan Frontier Families*, 211–15.

TIBET 1924

A very British coup attempt?*

Alex McKay

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In the course of my research into the character, role and influence of the British officials in Tibet during the 1904–47 period, it became apparent that previous scholarship had failed to fully confront an issue which would explain the clear decline in Anglo-Tibetan relations during the latter half of the 1920s. There is considerable evidence to suggest that the British officer then in immediate charge of Anglo-Tibetan relations, attempted to promote a *coup d'état* in Tibet, in order to transfer secular power from the Dalai Lama and his court to Tsarong Shape, the forward-thinking Commander-in-Chief of the Tibetan Army. This possibility has been rejected by the leading European historians of the period, but their conclusions are, I will argue, in need of reassessment.

In the wider context, this is an issue which relates to debate over the nature, extent, and consequences of indigenous 'collaboration' with the British imperial presence in South Asia. It is clear that the British cultivation of a network of local 'collaborators' – or to use a less pejorative term, 'supporters', was a deliberate strategy by the imperial power. If the British were to understand, influence, and rule South Asia, they needed to attract the support of the indigenous elites. Thus imperial officials actively sought to cultivate supporters amongst rulers and ruling classes of the societies that they encountered.

The Foreign and Political Department (hereafter, the Political Department), of the Government of India was particularly concerned with the cultivation of local supporters. Its officers were specifically instructed that 'The first duty of a Political Officer is to cultivate direct, friendly, personal relations with the Ruling Chiefs with whom he works'.¹ The Political Department was, in effect, India's diplomatic corps. It was responsible for relations with India's neighbours; in particular, the Indian Princely States, and protectorates and 'buffer states' such as Sikkim and Tibet. When relations were established with a neighbouring state, officers selected by the department were posted there to represent the Government of India. These officers tried to influence the state's rulers to follow policies considered beneficial to British interests. As one Political Officer's wife recalled, 'it was important that we get to know people, and . . . thereby be able to exert a positive influence in Tibet.'²

The realities of British power meant that in the Indian Princely States a Political Officer had a great deal of influence. Few rulers were strong enough to resist his

‘advice’. But in states beyond India’s borders, such as Tibet, the international implications of British actions there meant that the Political Officers had less power. In the 20th century, with the passing of the age of imperial expansion, officers in these states were forced to rely largely on the weapons of diplomacy to persuade local rulers and officials that it was to their advantage to support the British. But what actions were they to take when diplomacy failed and they were faced with an erstwhile supporter who, while not becoming actively hostile or threatening, had ceased to act upon the advice he was given?

An official British presence in Tibet was established by the 1903–04 Mission to Lhasa under the command of the Indian Political Officer, Colonel Francis Younghusband,³ who had been personally appointed to his position by the 1899–1905 Viceroy of India, Lord Curzon. Curzon was concerned by reports which indicated that the Russians were gaining influence in Tibet, and he sought to exclude Russian influence there by establishing a British representative in Lhasa. Although Whitehall, fearing international complications, refused to allow the establishment of a permanent diplomatic mission at Lhasa, it did permit the Government of India to establish three ‘Trade Agencies’ in Tibet, staffed by officers designated ‘Trade Agents’. They were so-called because Whitehall, under pressure from British and Indian trading interests which sought to open Tibet to free trade, accepted the need to station British officers in Tibet to oversee that trade. However, by appointing officers from the Indian Political Department as Trade Agents, the Government of India ensured that it would have diplomatic representatives in Tibet, as Curzon had intended. Thus, although the Trade Agents were nominally charged with the protection of the interests of British Indian traders, as Indian Political officers, their real priority was to exclude Russian (and later Chinese) influence from Tibet in order to ensure the security of India’s northern border.⁴

The Trade Agents, and, after the establishment of a permanent British Mission in Lhasa in 1936–37, the Lhasa Mission officials, were under the immediate command of the Political Officer Sikkim, who was stationed in Gangtok (the Sikkimese capital). This officer was responsible for British relations with Tibet, Sikkim and Bhutan. Most of his work concerned Tibet, and he was the Government of India’s principal advisor on Tibetan affairs. For want of a recognised collective term embracing Trade Agents, Lhasa Mission officials and the senior post of Political Officer Sikkim, I use the term ‘Tibet cadre’ to describe these officers.

The official British presence in Tibet lasted until Indian independence in 1947, and throughout the 1904–47 period, the Tibet cadre maintained a distinct collective identity through a process of selection and training. As a result of this process the British officers, although by no means similar types of personality, developed a broad continuity of approach to Tibetan affairs. In the apparent absence of official instructions as to their role, they saw themselves as diplomats representing the Government of India, but following in the tradition of 19th century imperial frontier officials in other regions (such as the Northwest Frontier Province), they considered their duty was to advance British interests and position. Whitehall had intended them to be overseers of frontier trade, but as members of India’s diplomatic corps, they defined their role within the identity and traditions of that service.⁵

As the first Trade Agent in Gyantse, Younghusband appointed his ‘right-hand man’ on the Mission to Lhasa, Captain ‘Frank’ O’Connor,⁶ a keen supporter of Curzon’s ‘forward’ policies. O’Connor’s successor was a young officer who had made

his name on the Younghusband Mission, Lieutenant F. M. Bailey,⁷ who remained in close touch with Younghusband and O'Connor. In Gangtok, Charles Bell⁸ became Political Officer in Sikkim. While Bell, an ex-ICS, rather than Indian Army officer, was a very different type of person to O'Connor and Bailey, he continued, and refined, Curzon's 'forward' policies. Thus in the formative years of the British presence in Tibet the officers there all represented the 'forward school' of thinking on frontier policy, and, the common theme of the policies the Tibet cadre promoted was that they were designed, or served, to deepen British involvement in Tibet, and increase Tibetan dependence on British structures and 'advice'. This meant that the cadre resisted the prevailing trend of their Government's policies, which was to refrain from further territorial expansion.

The 13th Dalai Lama had fled to Mongolia as Younghusband approached Lhasa, appointing a Regent in his stead. Although the Regent was a well-respected religious figure, he apparently had neither knowledge of, nor interest in, worldly affairs. Thus the withdrawal of the Younghusband Mission from Tibet left behind a power vacuum which made it difficult for the Tibet cadre to identify suitable 'Ruling Chiefs' whom they might cultivate as supporters. China was nominally the suzerain power in Tibet, and recognised as such by the British Government. But the British positions in Tibet posed a threat to Chinese power and prestige in the region, and the Chinese, who considered Tibet part of their empire, sought to regain power there. By 1907 they had established effective control over Central Tibet, and virtually eliminated British influence at Lhasa. But while Whitehall was prepared to sacrifice the Trade Agencies in the interests of wider Anglo-Chinese relations, the cadre officers had come to argue that China's power was a potential threat to the security of India, and they sought to ally with the Tibetan leadership against the Chinese.

After Younghusband's departure, the British Government refused to allow its Indian officials to visit Lhasa. With that stricture enforced, the most powerful figure the cadre could contact was the Panchen Lama. He maintained an independent power structure at Shigatse, with his own court and officials, tax-paying territory, and even foreign policy. Significant numbers of Tibetans regarded the Panchen, rather than the Dalai Lama, as their supreme sovereign in both the temporal and secular realms. Soon after the opening of the Gyantse Trade Agency, O'Connor paid a formal visit to the Lama's Shigatse monastery. He, and subsequently Bailey, got on well with the Panchen Lama, a somewhat worldly figure of similar age to the Agents. The Lama was given various gifts, including modern rifles and a motor car, and in 1906 he was invited to India, where he was treated with great ceremony in what was clearly stated as being an attempt to impress him.

In the immediate post-Younghusband period, before the cadre identified the Chinese as their enemy, one of the 'leading lights' of the 'forward school', the Indian Foreign Secretary, Louis (later Sir Louis) Dane, had seen that the Panchen Lama might be a solution to the Tibetan problem. Dane suggested that if the Panchen Lama took the place of the Dalai Lama in Lhasa, with Chinese approval, the British could then recognise Chinese authority in Tibet and 'effectively settle the unruly Tibetans and exclude Russian influence'. But although Dane went so far as to seek details of historical precedents concerning the Chinese deposition of the 6th and 7th Dalai Lamas, he also considered the possibility that the Panchen Lama 'may yet be an Indian Ruling Chief'.⁹

Dane had a very high opinion of O'Connor at Gyantse, and on several occasions prevented the outspoken O'Connor from being censured when he upset his immediate superiors, as he frequently did. Given Dane's close relationship with O'Connor, it was no surprise that it should be O'Connor who subsequently promoted a plan to centre British policy in Tibet around the Panchen Lama. In February 1907, O'Connor proposed that the Government of India should encourage the Panchen Lama to declare his independence from Lhasa and establish a separate state in southern Tibet, centred around the Panchen Lama's Shigatse headquarters. O'Connor argued that if the British then recognised the new state and supported it militarily with arms sales and the stationing of British troops in the new state, the Chinese and Lhasa Tibetan Governments would not be able to prevent the establishment of the new state, and British India would have a friendly and co-operative northern neighbour.¹⁰

O'Connor's proposal aroused great opposition, and was never acted on. But it was consistent with 'forward school' thinking. While Tibet was too large for Britain to protect militarily, a southern Tibetan state could have been supported, would have provided a forward position for British interests beyond the Himalayas, and had the potential to be drawn within the frontiers of British India in due course. O'Connor's perspective was limited, wider geopolitical implications (such as Russian and Chinese opposition) made the plan impossible for Britain to support, but O'Connor's relations with the Panchen Lama gave him a strongly Shigatse-influenced perspective on Tibetan identity, which was not then firmly defined in the British understanding. Tibet at that time had few of the key indicators of modern statehood; it had neither fixed boundaries, nor an indigenous leadership in administrative control of its territory, citizens and foreign relations.

After O'Connor and Bailey had left Gyantse, and with the Chinese increasing their control over Tibet, the British position there declined to the point where withdrawal was becoming a serious option. But in 1910 the Dalai Lama, who had briefly returned to Lhasa, fled south into India to escape a large body of Chinese troops which had been sent to enforce control in Central Tibet. The Dalai Lama's unexpected arrival in India gave the Tibet cadre the chance to cultivate the friendship of the traditional Lhasa leadership. The Political Officer Sikkim, Charles Bell, was responsible for the Dalai Lama during his exile, and he was able to establish a genuine personal friendship with the Tibetan leader. In 1911, the Chinese revolution meant the collapse of their position in Tibet. The Dalai Lama returned from exile the following year, and issued what the Tibetans regard as a declaration of independence. Bell offered the Dalai Lama such help as his Government would permit, and acted as his principal advisor on secular matters such as the modernisation of Tibet. Bell supported the Dalai Lama's rule, advancing policies based on support for the traditional power structure in Tibet, and the Tibetan leader followed his advice.¹¹ Bell established what was to be the predominant British policy towards Tibet until 1947, that of support for the Dalai Lama and his Government, and it is important to note that what is being examined in this paper is an exception to the predominant policy.

In 1920, Bell's career culminated in his being permitted to visit Lhasa; the first senior British official to travel there since the Younghusband Mission. Bell spent a year in Lhasa, being briefly joined by his long-serving and loyal assistant, Trade Agent David MacDonald,¹² who had been instrumental in enabling the Dalai Lama to escape to India in 1910. In Lhasa, Bell worked closely with the Dalai Lama, and, as

Curzon and Younghusband had envisaged, the presence of a Political Officer in Lhasa enabled the British to exert a great deal of influence there. When Bell departed, Anglo-Tibetan relations were at their most cordial.

Bell retired as Political Officer Sikkim while he was in Lhasa, and his replacement was the former Gyantse Trade Agent, Frank O'Connor. O'Connor however, wanted the higher ranking, and soon-to-be-vacant position of British representative in Kathmandu, and, in a rather complicated manoeuvre, he was able to transfer to the Kathmandu post after a few months, and arrange for his former successor in Gyantse, F. M. Bailey, to take over as Political Officer in Sikkim.¹³

In the years since he had been in Gyantse, Bailey had made a name for himself. He had explored the eastern extremities of the Brahmaputra, been shipwrecked off the China coast, and served at Gallipoli before being withdrawn from war service by the Government of India. In 1918, he was sent on an intelligence mission to Tashkent, to report on the situation there as the Bolsheviki took control. A series of story-book adventures followed. Bailey was soon forced to disguise himself – notably as an Albanian deserter, a disguise so successful that he was hired by Russian Intelligence to find the British agent (Bailey himself) they knew was in the area. Bailey finally made his way back to India, where he took up the post O'Connor had arranged for him.¹⁴

Bailey was now an experienced intelligence agent. In his early years in Tibet he had administered the intelligence network set-up by O'Connor, which made regular payments to a variety of informants; Indians, Sikkimese and Bhutanese, Nepalese, Tibetans, and even Chinese. His explorations also had intelligence implications. Bailey's famous journey from Peking to Sadiya, described as a private one, had earned him a substantial sum from 'Secret Service' funds. His activities in Russian Central Asia were only the most visible events of his intelligence career.¹⁵

Bell had reported from Lhasa that 'there is no danger of Bolshevism in Tibet' as it was antithetical to their religion and culture.¹⁶ Bailey, however, took a different view. He, like O'Connor and many other senior officers of the Raj, believed in a Russian threat to India, not perhaps by invasion, but by subversion, and considered it a duty to fight that threat. There were attempts by the new Russian regime to gain influence in Tibet in the 1920s, many details of which are only now emerging. Russian agents were dispatched to Lhasa among pilgrim parties from the Russian Buddhist regions, and there was a Russian agent in Lhasa's biggest monastery, Drepung. Although he had his own informants among the Russians, in particular, the Kalmyk Buriat leader Zamba Haldenov, described as 'Chief Buddhist priest of the Astrakhan Kalmucks',¹⁷ Bailey's concern at the Russian threat may well have been the primary motive for his subsequent actions.

When he took as over as Political Officer Sikkim, Bailey had been out of contact with Tibet for more than a decade. Bell was still in Lhasa, but the two had never been close associates. Unlike the scholarly Bell, Bailey's view of a Political Officer's role was more orientated towards command than advice. As one observer commented 'Bailey . . . believe[s] it inconsistent with the maintenance of dignity to pander too much to native ideas.'¹⁸ This attitude of Bailey's also alienated David MacDonald (then acting as Trade Agent in Gyantse and in Yatung), who had a great deal of influence on the frontier.

As Bell chose not to invite Bailey to join him in Lhasa, Bailey had no close ties with the Dalai Lama and his court. He had to establish himself with the Tibetans, and

indeed his own government, although he did not lack influential support there. His mentor, O'Connor, was now British representative in Kathmandu, and Bailey was also on very good terms with the Political Officer in Assam, Captain G. A. Nevill, as well as with the missionaries in Eastern Tibet who provided the British with valuable intelligence on that sector. In distant Whitehall, Lord Curzon was now British Foreign Minister, and, in addition, Bailey had married into British aristocracy, and had contacts at many levels of the British establishment. Once Bell had retired, MacDonald was isolated, and Bailey could then rely on the support of the other officers concerned with affairs in Central and Eastern Tibet, and from Whitehall.

After Bell's departure a number of problems arose in Anglo-Tibetan relations. The introduction of Bell's plans for the gradual modernisation of Tibet aroused conservative opposition from within Tibetan monastic and aristocratic circles which proved too strong for the Dalai Lama to ignore. Despite some well publicised changes – telegraph and electric installations in the Potala for instance – the Tibetans showed little enthusiasm for modernisation. They opposed changes to their traditional social structures, just as they had done when the Chinese had attempted to introduce similar changes in the 1907–11 period. It became apparent to Bailey that the existing Tibetan Government would not make the changes in Tibet which British interests demanded. Most particularly, the Tibetans were unwilling to strengthen their military forces, to the extent necessary if Tibet was to act as a strong 'buffer state' for British India's northern frontier; one capable of excluding Russian influence. There were also a number of minor incidents which placed additional strain on Anglo-Tibetan relations, for example, the illicit journey to Lhasa early in 1923 by the American lecturer at the School of Oriental Studies in London, William McGovern.¹⁹

Bailey was unable to arrange a visit to Lhasa until 1924, and having apparently come to the conclusion that the Dalai Lama was unwilling, or unable to lead Tibet in the direction British Indian interests demanded, Bailey attempted to develop alternative contacts in Tibet's power structure which might support modernisation policies. Given Bailey's military background, he found natural allies in Tibet's military forces, which were being modernised with British assistance. The new military power in Tibet was closely associated with Tsarong Shape, who rose from humble beginnings to become the Commander-in-Chief of the Tibetan Army in 1915.

Tsarong had made his name commanding a small force which held off the Chinese army pursuing the Dalai Lama as he fled to exile in India in 1910. MacDonald had then disguised him as one of the British mail-runners to enable him to join the Dalai Lama in India. Tsarong was clearly an outstanding individual, a powerful figure in Lhasa politics who enjoyed a close relationship with the Dalai Lama. He was also exceptional in having a great interest in the world outside Tibet, and while British sources prefer to emphasise his ties with them, he also befriended other foreign visitors to Tibet. Tsarong was the kind of man the British understood; he was considered 'the one man who is really wide-awake in Lhasa'; – and one who could 'hold his drink well'.²⁰ Bailey naturally identified Tsarong as a potential ally. Tsarong however, lacked either a monastic or aristocratic power base, and his officers, who had been trained by the Gyantse Escort Commander or at Quetta Military College, were suspected by conservative Tibetans of having adopted European values.

With his Government reluctant to allow him to visit Lhasa, it was difficult for Bailey to establish close ties with Tsarong. But in 1922 he personally arranged, apparently

without the support of the Government of India, for General George Pereira, a former military attache at the British Legation in Peking whom Bailey had met there in 1910, to visit Lhasa en route from Peking to India. Pereira was officially described as a 'private traveller', but in his memoirs David MacDonald, who was not then in Bailey's confidence, made the unusual comment on Pereira's travels that 'Whether his . . . journey was inspired by motives other than exploration and the desire to be the first European to reach Lhasa from the Chinese side I do not know, nor did he tell me.'²¹

Pereira gave Bailey detailed reports on the state of Tibetan military forces throughout the country, and, while in Lhasa in October 1922, he held talks with Tsarong. Pereira's principal recommendation to Bailey was that in order to organize the Tibetan army 'it is absolutely necessary to send a military advisor to Tsarong'.²² In Lhasa, Pereira obviously exerted some influence on the Tibetan Government. The day after he left, the Tibetans asked the Government of India to lend them the services of the Darjeeling Police Inspector, Laden La,²³ who had been in charge of the Dalai Lama's security during his exile in India, to establish and train a police force in Lhasa (an innovation Bell had recommended to the Dalai Lama). This request gave Bailey the chance to develop ties with Tsarong.

Wider international considerations made it obvious that Whitehall would not sanction posting a British military officer to Lhasa. But Laden La was an experienced police and intelligence officer, then highly regarded by the British and trusted by the Tibetans, and he had recently been in Lhasa assisting Charles Bell. Laden La could fill a dual role, while setting up a police force, he would have access to all levels of Tibetan society, and could also advise Tsarong and the military. Bailey persuaded the Government of India that it was of 'considerable political importance' to get Laden La to Lhasa, where he would effectively be the Government of India's representative.²⁴ Arrangements for his mission took time, but Laden La eventually arrived in Lhasa in September 1923 and established a 200 man police force.²⁵ He also established close ties with Tsarong, although relations between the ordinary Tibetan soldiers, and the far-better paid policemen, quickly deteriorated. Meanwhile, on New Years Day, 1924, news had reached the Gyantse Trade Agent that Lhasa's long-simmering dispute with the Panchen Lama had culminated in the Shigatse Lama's fleeing into exile in China. Tibet's traditional power structure was clearly threatened.

Bailey began planning his own mission to Lhasa, which the Government of India approved early in March. Political Officers invariably exaggerated evidence supporting the need for their Lhasa missions in order to convince a reluctant Whitehall, but Bailey was clearly worried that the Russians would take advantage of the confused situation in Tibet. He warned his Government shortly before his departure that one 'Zyrianin' was undertaking a mission from Urga to Lhasa 'with a view to establish Bolshevism in Tibet'.²⁶ Bailey set out for the Tibetan capital around the middle of June. He was accompanied, for reasons unknown, by the Assam Political Officer, Captain Nevill, and they arrived in Gyantse on 3 July 1924.²⁷ But events in Lhasa overshadowed his mission.

Early in May 1924, a fight between groups of police and soldiers ended with Tsarong punishing two soldiers by mutilation, as a result of which one died. Mutilation had been forbidden as a punishment by the Dalai Lama, and Tsarong's monastic and aristocratic opponents apparently sought to use this incident to engineer his dismissal.

Tsarong's supporters, including Laden La, sought to preserve his position. That much is definitely known. Accounts of the events that followed, and who was involved, are confused. But it appears that this incident brought tensions between the modernising and conservative tendencies in Tibetan society to a head. Tsarong's supporters, including Laden La, began what was apparently a somewhat disorganised effort to take secular power from the Dalai Lama and transfer it to Tsarong Shape.²⁸ The timing of events was such that, had the Dalai Lama been relieved of secular power, Bailey would have arrived in Lhasa to be greeted by a new Tibetan Government headed by Tsarong. Bailey's support for Tsarong would probably have been decisive; but the 'plot' was not carried through to that conclusion. What happened remains difficult to ascertain. Bailey did not report fully on the matter, and it was several years before versions of events emerged into public record.

Bailey visited Lhasa between 16 July and 16 August 1924. There he spent much of his time discussing modernisation with Tsarong. Bailey's Lhasa report reveals that he asked Tsarong what would happen if the Dalai Lama died; perhaps a curious question, given that the Tibetan leader was apparently then in the best of health. Tsarong replied that if the Government of India sent troops it would stop any trouble, but Bailey warned him that this was impossible, given the British Government policy of non-interference in Tibet's internal affairs. Bailey also advised Tsarong to deposit money in India in case he had to flee into exile. When Bailey left Lhasa, he stayed at the Gyantse Trade Agency, where he was joined a few weeks later by Tsarong, who had conveniently chosen to go on a pilgrimage to India, a pilgrimage which included meetings with leading officials in Nepal and India, including the Viceroy. Bailey left Gyantse on 26 September, and Tsarong, who apparently travelled via Shigatse, the now vacant seat of the Panchen Lama, left the following day. They met up again in India, and Bailey accompanied Tsarong on parts of his tour.²⁹

Bailey's departure from Lhasa was the signal for a series of events which greatly reduced British prestige in Tibet. The struggle between the 'conservative' and 'modernising' tendencies in Tibetan society culminated in defeat for modernisation. Laden La left Lhasa on 9 October 1924,³⁰ and the police force lost all power. Tsarong found on his return that he had been removed from his post as Army Commander and that his young military supporters had been dismissed or dispersed. There were a number of other indications that the British were out of favour with the Tibetans, and evidence that in the late 1920s the Dalai Lama was again turning to China or Russia for support. The concluding years of Bailey's term as Political Officer in Sikkim thus saw Anglo-Tibetan relations at a very low ebb.

A number of historians have commented on the causes of this decline in the British position in Tibet. They have concluded that the Dalai Lama turned away from the British because of their failure to obtain Chinese agreement to the 1914 Simla Convention, or their failure to supply further weaponry, or due to the social stresses produced by modernisation, or blamed it on a wider British decline in power in the East.³¹ Although it would go a long way towards explaining the British decline, histories of this period have dismissed any suggestion of British involvement in a plot to depose the Dalai Lama.

Richardson does not refer to the incident at all, although in connection with Chinese accusations of British support for 'militaristic lay officials who wanted to substitute some form of civil government for the Lama hierarchy' in the 1930s, he states

that 'to suggest that the British Government would assist such a group-if it existed... is... inept'. (This Chinese accusation may reflect their belated knowledge of rumours about the 1923-24 coup attempt.³²) Alastair Lamb (who knew both Bailey and Neville), while noting rumours of a conspiracy between Laden La and Tsarong Shape, is content to record that there is 'not a vestige of evidence' for this in the India Office Library records. Mervyn Goldstein, after a detailed study of the events, writes that 'Ladenla[sic] was an Indian official, and it would have been unreasonable to assume he acted without orders or at least official encouragement'; but he footnotes this statement simply with the contradictory and unsupported remark that, 'This is, however, precisely what happened'.³³

There was no doubt as to Laden La's involvement, although his role took some time to emerge. The chief Tibetan administrator in Gyantse, the Khenchung, apparently at the Dalai Lama's behest, gave the British a full account of the incident in 1926, when Bailey was on leave. Frank Ludlow, the noted plant-collector and later Head of Mission in Lhasa, who ran an English school in Gyantse in 1923-26, saw 'no reason why' the Khenchung's account should not be accepted as true. Even the Government of India eventually accepted that Laden La had been involved, judging from the Indian National Archives file on this matter, which is entitled 'Indiscretion of Laden La in associating with Tibetan officers attempting to overthrow the Dalai Lama' - a file which unfortunately remains closed.³⁴

The Government of India's treatment of Laden La is instructive. When he left Lhasa, ostensibly suffering from a nervous breakdown, he took six months leave, and then resumed his post in Darjeeling. Far from being censured, he was promoted to the post of Trade Agent in Yatung, but the Dalai Lama, who now deeply mistrusted him, objected. The Dalai Lama wrote that Laden La, 'is not altogether a steady and straightforward man and it is not known how he would serve to maintain Anglo-Tibetan amity'. The posting was canceled, but Laden La continued to be regarded as a valuable agent, and was employed by subsequent Political Officers on missions to Lhasa.³⁵

Laden La was not, however, universally popular on the frontier. He had annoyed Ludlow, who considered his actions in Lhasa partly to blame for the closure of the Gyantse school, while in McGovern's account of his journey to Lhasa, published in 1924, Laden La was, in passing, accused of using his office for profit. MacDonald later wrote to Bell that 'It is amazing to me how Laden La manages to mislead the powers that be! In Darjeeling he is liked openly only by those he can override. When McGovern published his so called libel on Laden La, if he had gone the right way about things, Laden La would not have been in power today.'³⁶

After the Khenchung brought out the story of the coup attempt in 1926, Bailey defended Laden La. He originally argued that the Khenchung's account was 'inconceivable', and when he finally admitted to Government that Laden La had indeed 'certainly committed a serious indiscretion', stated that he hoped no action would be taken against Laden La: none was. Norbu Dhondup, who later headed the British Mission in Lhasa, summed the matter up in a letter to Bailey. He wrote that 'through your favour Laden La [was] saved, otherwise he was ruined.'³⁷

Has previous scholarship been correct in rejecting Bailey's involvement in the plot? Certainly Bailey claimed ignorance of Laden La's activities, but to answer in the negative we must conclude that one of the outstanding intelligence agents of the time was ignorant of the activities of his own key agent at a crucial time and place. The

weight of circumstantial evidence certainly points to there having been a coup planned under Bailey's direction; we cannot necessarily expect empirical evidence. An experienced intelligence operator such as Bailey would naturally conceal evidence of a failed coup attempt if he could, and at that time and place it was not unduly difficult for him to do so. The reporting of events in Tibet was largely controlled by the Political Officer in Sikkim, and Bailey apparently took full advantage of his power to restrict Government's knowledge of the matter. It was only when Bailey went on leave some two years after the events, that they were fully reported to the Government of India.³⁸

Viewed from the perspective that is obtained by a study of the Tibet cadre's mentality, the events of this period appear to follow a logical sequence. Bailey had apparently come to the conclusion that the only way to modernise Tibet to the extent where it would provide a secure northern border for India and exclude Russian influence in the region was by establishing a secular government in Tibet under Tsarong Shape's leadership. Pereira's reports must have been a significant influence on Bailey; it is clear from the way in which Bailey arranged permission for him to travel freely in areas normally closed to travellers that he had an important role. In sending Laden La to encourage Tsarong, Bailey had an agent whose actions he could disown officially if they failed, while rewarding him later for his efforts.

There is of course a possibility that Laden La acted on his own initiative, in the tradition his 'forward' thinking superiors had inculcated in him, but Laden La was not officially attached to the Political Department at this time. Had he, as a Provincial Police Officer, been involved in a foreign conspiracy without significant support from British officers, it is hard to believe he could have escaped dismissal from government service. It is equally unlikely that the British would have continued to use a frontier officer who really had had a nervous breakdown on duty.

Bailey's plans (if such they were) for a Tibetan state under Tsarong's leadership echo O'Connor's earlier plans for the Panchen Lama. O'Connor, then in Kathmandu, may also have been involved in this plan. Bailey was in close touch with him at that time, as he was with Captain Nevill, the Political Officer in Assam who accompanied him on at least part of his mission to Lhasa. Bailey's plan would have been a typical 'forward school' move, aimed at linking Tibet more closely to British India, while also serving to place Bailey in the position Bell had obtained, of being a close friend and advisor to a Tibetan ruler. Bailey would have known that he could not expect his Government to approve a plan to overthrow the Tibetan Government, but that if such a plan succeeded, with British involvement concealed, his government would probably accept it, particularly as they would rely largely on the advice Bailey, O'Connor and Nevill would give – that a Tsarong-led Tibet was in Britain's best interests.

Under Tsarong, the modernisation of Tibet on the British model could then have proceeded. When the plan failed, the Dalai Lama had no real proof of any British involvement, and may have only gradually come to suspect its full extent. If this was the case, it would then explain why he distanced himself from the British, and withdrew his support for British-sponsored modernisation. Certainly the Dalai Lama adopted a more balanced foreign policy after the events of 1924, exploring alternative avenues of support for his regime along lines less liable to arouse monastic opposition, or create a secular alternative to his rule.

If replacing the Dalai Lama by Tsarong Shape was Bailey's plan, it failed for two reasons, reasons which were also behind the failure of O'Connor's earlier plans for the

Panchen Lama. Firstly the policy and financial restrictions imposed by the British and Indian Governments meant Bailey was unable to offer real support to the 'modernising' faction in the form of military assistance, which would have been decisive. Secondly Tsarong, like the Panchen Lama, was apparently unwilling to take the decisive step of declaring his claim for power. While the earlier failure by the Panchen Lama to accept secular power in Tibet has been blamed on the weakness of his character,³⁹ no such accusation can be leveled against Tsarong. Rather it appears that his loyalty to the Dalai Lama was too strong for him to turn against his benefactor, and Tsarong knew that even if the Dalai Lama died he lacked sufficient support to take over Tibet without British military assistance. Tsarong consequently chose to go to India on pilgrimage rather than to make a firm challenge for power.

There are a number of loose ends in this matter. A certain Pedma Chandra, a Bhutanese national who had taught Tibetan at Calcutta university, was employed by the British as a translator for the British officers training Tibetan troops in Gyantse at that time. Chandra then turns up in Lhasa, apparently assisting Laden La. Although he may just have been a convenient scapegoat, he was later accused by the Tibetans of being one of the prime movers behind the coup plan, encouraging Tibetan military officers to gather their troops in Shigatse to fight the Tibetan Government.⁴⁰ He eventually attempted to flee Tibet when the Dalai Lama began to dismiss officers suspected of involvement in the plot, and he was killed by a pursuit party. His head was brought back and exhibited in Lhasa, with a notice accusing him of embezzlement and of speaking out against the Dalai Lama. The 13th Dalai Lama had abolished the death penalty in Tibet, and such incidents were extremely rare. But Chandra's exact role remains a mystery, as does that of Captain Nevill.⁴¹

There seems little likelihood of uncovering further evidence of this matter in British records. Bailey would not have confided in MacDonald, with whom he was in dispute, and certainly not with Yatung's other European resident, MacDonald's son-in-law Frank Perry, who, much to Bailey's annoyance, reported events in Tibet to the 'Daily Mail'. There were other British officials in Tibet at the time; apart from Ludlow, there was a Captain J. E. Cobbett in command of the Gyantse Trade Agent's Escort, and a Medical Officer, Major J. H. Hislop M. C., who accompanied Bailey to Lhasa. Hislop, a Scot, later served at the Lhasa Mission in the 1940s, where it was said that he had 'survived drinking more at high altitude than was previously thought possible'.⁴² But neither officer appears to have left any record of their time in Tibet. The same applies to then Gyantse Head Clerk, Henry Martin (who spent more time in Tibet than any other European in history), and to the telegraph and communications personnel.

British [and perhaps even Tibetan] interests today are best served by maintaining that the British officials who dealt with Tibet worked in conjunction with the Dalai Lama's Government, with the result that the 13th Dalai Lama has been seen as a supporter of the British. But each power structure, British, Tibetan, and Chinese, sought to promote its own interests. It was not until after the Dalai Lama came under Charles Bell's influence during his exile in India that the Tibet cadre supported the Dalai Lama as the leader of Tibet, and the Tibet cadre's view was not accepted by their Government until the Dalai Lama had returned to Tibet and regained power in 1913.

When the Dalai Lama came to be seen as unwilling or unable to follow British 'advice', it appears that Bailey tried to establish an alternative leader who would

follow British advice. It was only because the Tibet cadre were prevented by their Government from openly carrying through ‘forward’ policies in Tibet, and because they could not find alternatives to the leadership of the Dalai Lama, that they had to continue to deal with the existing Tibetan ruling structure. The ‘men on the spot’ were prepared to support an alternative ruler to the Dalai Lama, and they were only prepared to support the Dalai Lama as long as he served their interests, or when there was no alternative. Studies of the period which do not recognise this *realpolitik* have tended to take Bailey’s denials at face-value.

But the events of this period gave the Tibet cadre a greater understanding of the Tibetans. They did not make the mistake again of allying with a faction of Tibetan society at the expense of others, and in the 1930s and ‘40s they greatly expanded their range of contacts in Tibet. As Richardson later wrote ‘descriptions of this or that official . . . as “pro-British”, [or] “pro-Chinese” [are] too facile. The only thing the Tibetans have been “pro” is the preservation of their Religious State.’⁴³ Following the events of 1924, the Tibet cadre had to be content to deal with the Dalai Lama and the traditional Tibetan Government.

Notes

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- 1 ‘Manual of Instructions for Political Officers’, by S. H. Butler, 1909, contained within Oriental and India Collection (henceforth OIC; formerly the India Office Library and Records), L/P&S/7/237–526.
- 2 M. D. Williamson, with J. Snelling, *Memoirs of a Political Officer’s Wife in Tibet, Sikkim and Bhutan* (London, 1987), p. 104.
- 3 Lieutenant-Colonel Sir Francis Edward Younghusband (1863–1942) KCSI. KCIE. Born in India, the Son of an Indian Police Officer, he was educated at Clifton and Sandhurst, and was later Resident in Kashmir. For a recent, comprehensive biography, including a good account of the mission, see P. French, *Younghusband: The Last Great Imperial Adventurer* (London, 1994).
- 4 Trade Agencies were established at Gyantse and Yatung in Central Tibet, and at Gartok in Western Tibet; British officers were not used at the latter post. See A. C. McKay, ‘The Establishment of the British Trade Agencies in Tibet: A Survey’, *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society*, 3.2.3., (1992).
- 5 See A. C. McKay, *Tibet and the British Raj: The Frontier Cadre 1904–1947*, London (Curzon Press) 1997; also see A. C. McKay, *Tibet and the British Raj: The Influence of the Indian Political Department Officers*, Ph.D. thesis, London University S.O.A.S., (1995).
- 6 Lieutenant-Colonel Sir William Frederick Travers O’Connor CSI. CIE. CVO. (1870–1943). Born in Ireland and educated at Charterhouse and the Royal Military Academy Woolwich, he served as Trade Agent Gyantse between 1904 and 1907, and was Political Officer Sikkim for 3 months in 1921.
- 7 Lieutenant-Colonel Frederick Marsham Bailey CIE. (1882–1967). Bailey, a noted explorer and naturalist, was born in India, the son of an Indian Army Officer. He was educated at Wellington, the Edinburgh Academy, and Sandhurst, and was later British Resident in Kashmir and Nepal. He served as Trade Agent in Gyantse and Yatung between 1905 and 1909, and was Political Officer Sikkim from 1921–28.

- 8 Sir Charles Bell KCIE. CMG. CIE. (1870–1945). Born in India, he was educated at Winchester and Oxford. Bell served at Yatung and Gangtok at various times between 1904 and 1908, and was Political Officer Sikkim for most of the period 1908–20.
- 9 File notes by Dane, 2 December 1905, & 30 December 1905, FD, 1906 Secret E March 228–245; India to Secretary of State, 23 January 1906, & file note by Dane, 12 January 1906, FD, 1906 Secret E March 154–191, National Archives of India (hereafter NAI).
- 10 A. Lamb, *The McMahon Line* (London, 1966), pp. 134–37. [Lamb's reference, PEF 1908/22, No 1226, O'Connor to India, 3 February 1907, is no longer used.]
- 11 See, for example, C. Bell, *Tibet Past and Present*, (Delhi, 1992; first published, Oxford, 1924), pp. 184–85, 189.
- 12 David MacDonald (1870–1962), was half-Sikkimese. After serving on the Younghusband Mission, he became Yatung Trade Agent in 1909, and remained serving there and in Gyantse until 1924. He was Political Officer Sikkim for four months in 1921.
- 13 McKay, *Tibet, 1997*, p. 53.
- 14 See F. M. Bailey, *Mission to Tashkent* (London, 1946).
- 15 Re informants, see White to India, 25 July 1906, FD, 1906 External B August 180–181; Secret Service accounts, FD, 1908 Establishment B December 165–195, NAI. Re Bailey's journey to Sadiya, see FD, 1912 Secret E January 65–92, NAI. This file is classified as it contains a map, but the 'Index for Foreign Proceedings for the Year 1912', lists this file in two entries, one of which is obviously a misprint, giving the amount involved as 1,000 and 10,000 rupees respectively. Access to the Indian archives has led me to reassess my view that Bailey was not an intelligence officer in 1911; see McKay, *The Establishment*, p. 417. Given that the Government of India curtailed Bailey's Assam exploration in 1911, and considered that he had spent too long in Russian Central Asia, there must be a suspicion that Bailey's intelligence activities were not solely on behalf of the Government of India, whose interests by no means always co-incided with those of Whitehall.
- 16 Bell to India, 6 February 1921, L/P&S/11/195–1468, OIC.
- 17 Re Russian infiltration, see J. Snelling, *Buddhism in Russia* (Shaftsbury, 1993), pp. 212; Re Haldinov [Hodenof/Haldinoff], see Ludlow diary entry, 13 November 1924, MSS Eur D979; Bailey's Lhasa diary, various entries, MSS Eur F157–214, OIC; F&PD Index 1922–23, F. No 619-X, NAI; Bailey to India, 2 September 1924, 371–10291–4178 (1924) Foreign Office. Alex Andreyev of the St. Petersburg Cultural Foundation is currently researching Soviet activities in Tibet during this period; see 'The Bolshevik Intrigue in Tibet', paper delivered at the 7th Seminar of the International Association for Tibetan Studies, Graz, 1994.
- 18 W. McGovern, *To Lhasa in Disguise* (London, 1924), p. 39.
- 19 The modernisation of Tibet is the central theme of M. Goldstein, *A History of Modern Tibet, 1913–1951: The Demise of the Lamaist State* (London, 1989).
- 20 Ludlow diary entry, 22 September 1924, MSS Eur D979, OIC. Re Tsarong, see in particular, H. Spence, 'Tsarong 11, the Hero of Chaksam, and the Modernisation Struggle in Tibet, 1912–1931', *The Tibet Journal*, 26.1 (1991).
- 21 D. MacDonald, *Twenty Years in Tibet* (Delhi, 1991, first published London, 1932) p. 303; draft letter, Bailey to W. M. Hardy [a missionary on the Eastern Tibetan frontier], undated, cDecember 1923, Foreign Office 1842–1842–10.
- 22 Pereira to Bailey, 13 December 1922, MSS Eur F157–238, OIC.
- 23 *Kashag* to Bailey, 29 October 1922, L/P&S/11/235–2906, OIC. Rai Bahadur Sonam Wangfel Laden La (1876–1937), was a Sikkimese. He was a nephew of the *pandit* Urgyen Gyatso, who carried out a number of intelligence-gathering missions in Tibet in the late 19th century.
- 24 File note by E. B. Howell, 9 March 1923, Home Department 1923, File No 42 (v) Part B, NAI; so keen were the Government of India to use him that the ambitious Laden La was able to demand promotion to Superintendent as a condition of acceptance.
- 25 Gyantse Annual Report, 1923–24, L/P&S/10/218–2418, OIC; India to Government of Bengal, 31 August 1923, Home Department 1923, File No. 42 (V) Part B, NAI.
- 26 Bailey to India, 28 May 1924, 371–10233–2275 (1924), Foreign Office.
- 27 Bailey had served as Intelligence Officer in 1912–13 under Nevill on the Dibong Survey mission into hostile Abor country in Assam. Nevill had subsequently turned a blind eye to

- Bailey's evasion of bureaucratic obstacles to his exploration of the Tsangpo/Brahmaputra; see F. M. Bailey, *No Passport to Tibet* (London, 1957), pp. 31–40. Bailey's Lhasa Mission diary can be read as implying that Nevill accompanied him to Lhasa, although there is no other evidence of this; see diary entry of 18 July 1924, MSS Eur F157–214, OIC.
- 28 Despite the best efforts of Goldstein to compare accounts of these events, they remain contradictory; and there little point in repeating them here; see Goldstein, *A History*, pp. 121–137.
- 29 Bailey's Lhasa Mission diary, various entries, MSS Eur F157–214; Ludlow diary, various entries, September 1924, MSS Eur D979, OIC.
- 30 Copy of press communiqué dated 14 October 1924, L/P&S/10/1088–1417, OIC.
- 31 See, for example, I. Klein, 'British Imperialism in Decline: Tibet, 1914–1921', *Historian*, 34.1 (1971); also see Spence, *Tsarong*, p. 48.
- 32 I am indebted to Dr Michel Hockx of the IAS (Leiden), and his wife Yu Hong, who recalled that at school in China she had been taught that the British attempted a coup in Tibet in the 1920s. This led me to examine Wang Furen and Suo Wenqing, *Highlights of Tibetan History*, (Beijing, 1984), pp. 159–60. This states briefly that the British 'cultivated a clique of pro-British military officers headed by Tsha-rong[sic] . . . to use these troops to stage a coup . . . When the conspiratorial group was ready to strike in October 1924 the scheme leaked out. The Dalai Lama took prompt measures. Tsha-rong and other group members were removed from office or otherwise punished.' No sources are given. Aside from the misdating, the account appears consistent except in one key area: if there was such a coup attempt, it was under Bailey's direction, possibly with the assistance of other frontier officers. It did not involve the 'British' [Government], and was contrary to the general trend of British policy there at that time.
- 33 H. Richardson, *Tibet and its History*, (Boston, 1984, first published London, 1962), p. 137; A. Lamb, *Tibet, China and India, 1914–1950*, (Hertingfordbury, 1989), pp. 162, 175; Goldstein, *A History*, pp. 133–34.
- 34 Ludlow diary entry of 19 September 1926, MSS Eur D979, OIC; FD Index 1924–27, File No. 38 (2)-X, NAI. A request to the Indian Department of External Affairs for access to this file was refused in 1994.
- 35 Dalai Lama to Norbu Dhondup, cited in Norbu to Bailey, 7 October 1924, MSS F157–240; Laden La to Bell, 5 September 1925, MSS Eur F80 5a 97, OIC.
- 36 Ludlow diary entry, 26 July 1924, MSS Eur D979; Ludlow to Bailey, 3 November 1926, MSS Eur F157–241; MacDonald to Bell, 3 February 1930, MSS Eur F80 5a 92, OIC.
- 37 Various correspondence, 1927, L/P&S/10/1088; Norbu Dhondup to Bailey, 2 October 1931, MSS Eur F157–240, OIC. It should be noted, however, that Norbu and Laden La were rivals.
- 38 Norbu Dhondup to Bailey, 1 September 1927, MSS Eur F157–240. John Noel, photographer on the early Everest expeditions, wrote in another context that 'the opinions which Major Bailey quotes as coming from the Tibetans are entirely from himself . . . Government refers all matters to him and he practically dictates any answer he wishes'; Noel to RGS. Secretary, Arthur Hinks, 22 May 1925, Royal Geographical Society, Everest Collection, EE 27/6/13.
- 39 Re the Panchen Lama's character, see Lamb, A., *The McMahon*, pp. 18–19.
- 40 With the Panchen Lama fleeing into exile after tax-demands from Lhasa, there was considerable ill-feeling towards Lhasa there.
- 41 Bailey to India, 18 July 1925, & 4–6 October 1925, L/P&S/10/1088–2679, OIC; Goldstein, *A History*, pp. 126–30.
- 42 Diary entry of F. P. Mainprice, 15–19 October 1943, Mainprice papers, Cambridge South Asia Library.
- 43 H. Richardson, *Tibet*, p. 129.

A PILGRIM'S PROGRESS

The peregrinations of the 6th Panchen Lama

Fabienne Jagou

Source: *Lungta* (Dharamsala) 10 (1996): pp. 12–23.

On 22 December 1923,* at sunset, the 6th Panchen Lama (1883–1937) and his entourage secretly left Tashilhunpo monastery and sped towards the desolate highlands of Northern Tibet.

When the news broke out, the Tibetan government sent a force of 1000 soldiers, led by the official Lungshar, to intercept them. On arrival in Tsang, a detachment under Captain Tsogo took over the chase. Just as he was on the verge of catching up with the fugitives, Captain Tsogo – a disciple of the Panchen Lama – pretended to fall ill and deliberately made camp for two days, enabling the Panchen Lama's party to increase its head start. By the time the detachment resumed its advance, the Panchen Lama and his entourage had crossed the borders of Tibet.

Historical background

In the 17th century, the 5th Dalai Lama (1617–1682) chose Lobsang Chökyi Gyaltsen, (1570–1662) as his spiritual master. Lobsang Chökyi Gyaltsen, who had also trained the 4th Dalai Lama, had been the abbot of Tashilhunpo monastery since 1601, and had been conferred the title “Panchen”. All successive abbots since Gendün Drub (the 1st Dalai Lama, and the direct disciple of Tsongkhapa), who founded the monastery in 1447, bore the title of “Panchen”. A contraction of “Pandita Chenpo” – from the Sanskrit *pandita* or scholar, and the Tibetan *chenpo* or “great” – the title means “Great Scholar”.

But this title of the successive abbots of Tashilhunpo monastery became the name of the institution of the Panchen Lamas, as we know it, only from 1642, when the 5th Dalai Lama became the spiritual and temporal ruler of Tibet and conferred on his teacher, Lobsang Chökyi Gyaltsen, the ownership, in perpetuity, of the monastery. Lobsang Chökyi Gyaltsen is therefore regarded historically as the first Panchen Lama. In subsequent years the Dalai Lama made ever more generous endowments to his teacher, until Tashilhunpo monastery's property covered almost the entire province of Tsang and a sizeable portion of neighbouring Ngari province, to the west. The Panchen Lama's domain also extended as far as the borders of Nepal, Bhutan, Sikkim and India.

At the end of the 18th century, the East India Company had plans to open a trade route to China through Tibet. The first English envoy to Tibet, George Bogle, arrived at Tashilhunpo monastery in 1775. He spent some time there and met the 3rd Panchen Lama (1738–1780). Bogle's presence in Shigatse, as well as internal dissension among the Tibetans concerning the selection of the 8th Dalai Lama, attracted the attention of the Manchu Emperor in China. The Panchen Lama was invited to Beijing, where he died in 1780. From this point onwards, the history of the Panchen Lamas became entwined with the politics of British India and Imperial China.

On the one hand, interest in Tibet grew rapidly in Europe and the mysteries of the Land of Snows exerted a magnetic attraction on Britain's explorers and geographers. At the same time the possibilities of opening new trade routes, or the prospects of Tibet as a buffer against Russian expansion in Central Asia were no less sources of fascination for British officials in India. No effort was spared to make contact with the Tibetan authorities. On the other hand, China sought to enhance control over Tibet as a way of protecting its own empire against British intrusion.

Although Tibet's borders were closed to foreigners,¹ in 1879 and again in 1881 Tashilhunpo monastery's chief steward gave Sarat Chandra Das (1849–1917), a British subject born in Bengal, a passport valid for travel in Tibet. During the second voyage of Sarat Chandra Das, the Lhasa authorities unsuccessfully tried to arrest him. The chief steward of Tashilhunpo, however, paid dearly for his gesture of hospitality: he was condemned to death and executed by drowning.

The 13th Dalai Lama & the 6th Panchen Lama

Not long afterwards, in 1904, Colonel Francis Younghusband's troops advanced as far as Lhasa. In 1906, the 6th Panchen Lama accepted a British invitation to visit India, where he met the Viceroy, Lord Minto. The Tibetan government, as a result, possibly suspected the Panchen Lama of seeking British assistance in a bid to achieve some sort of independent status for his domain.²

In response to the Younghusband expedition, Manchu troops occupied the Tibetan region of Kham in 1908 and invaded Lhasa in February 1910. The 13th Dalai Lama, who had just returned to the Tibetan capital after several years of exile in Mongolia and China, fled once more, this time to British India. In January 1911, the Manchu imperial agent stationed in Lhasa invited the Panchen Lama to Lhasa, hoping this would convince the Tibetan population to abandon its resistance and co-operate with the Manchu authorities. The 6th Panchen Lama accepted the invitation. On arrival in Lhasa, he took it upon himself, at a number of official functions, to play the role that the 13th Dalai Lama would have played had he been present.³ He stayed at the Norbu Lingka, the 13th Dalai Lama's summer palace. Accompanied by the Manchu imperial agent, he led the procession during the "Offering of the Fifteenth" (*Chö-nga chöpa*) festival.

The 13th Dalai Lama declared, from his exile in India, that Sino-Tibetan relations – formerly based on the priest/patron relationship between the Dalai Lamas and the Manchu Emperors – had been broken and nullified when the Manchu army invaded Tibet in 1910. But revolution broke out in China a year later and a republican government replaced the Manchu dynasty. The infant Emperor, Puyi, abdicated on the 12th of February 1912. The Tibetans took the opportunity to expel the Manchu garrisons in Tibet and the 13th Dalai Lama returned to Lhasa towards the end of 1912.

In January 1913, the 13th Dalai Lama met the 6th Panchen Lama in Ralung, on the road to Lhasa. Their meeting was cordial. Neither the Panchen Lama nor any of his officials were punished for what many Tibetans regarded as their treasonous behaviour, or at the very least, *lèse majesté*.

During 1913, on the basis of the political experience gained abroad, the 13th Dalai Lama decided to embark upon a series of reforms designed both to modernise Tibet and to provide it with a well-equipped and well-trained army. With the help of the British, young Tibetans were sent to study in England, a couple of modern schools with English teachers were started in Tibet, a telegraph-line was set up between Gyantse and Sikkim, some geological surveys were undertaken for possible mineral deposits and a hydroelectric plant was installed near Lhasa.

However, setting up an effective army required considerable funding and the 13th Dalai Lama and his government decided to enact a special levy. To this end, the property held by the aristocracy and the religious institutions, including Tashilhunpo, was surveyed anew. The monastery was assessed a large sum in proportion to its extensive holdings. The 6th Panchen Lama, who had previously not paid any taxes, initially declared that the levy was unfair.⁴ He refused to submit to the new tax. After protracted negotiations he agreed to pay a portion of the total, stubbornly refusing to settle the entire amount.⁵ The Kashag (the Tibetan Cabinet) attempted to make the Panchen Lama comply, but the negotiations lost momentum.

In 1921, the 13th Dalai Lama and the 6th Panchen Lama corresponded at length. The Panchen Lama requested teachings from the Dalai Lama and invited him to consecrate a gigantic statue of the Maitreya Buddha that had just been erected at Tashilhunpo. The Dalai Lama turned down his requests. The Tibetan government also reproached the Panchen Lama for spending such substantial sums on a Maitreya statue at a time when he still refused to pay the levy for the establishment of a Tibetan army.

During the same period, the 13th Dalai Lama punished some Drepung monastery monks for having collaborated with the Manchus in 1911 and 1912. He had two of Loseling's (a college of Drepung) treasurers sent into exile and the college's abbots replaced.⁶ In 1923, the Lhasa government reminded the 6th Panchen Lama that he had to pay the levy. Negotiations were manifestly deadlocked. The Panchen Lama sent an offering of incense to the 13th Dalai Lama. The meaning was clear to the two masters: *pö* (Tib: spos), the Tibetan word for incense, has another meaning, that of changing one's residence. In return, the 13th Dalai Lama sent the 6th Panchen Lama a lively white horse, thus symbolically authorising him to leave Tibet. Finally, on the night of the Panchen Lama's departure, the 13th Dalai Lama instructed the Drepung monks to hold a large offering ceremony. No one in the entourage understood why, but in the days that followed, when the people learned that the Panchen Lama had left Tibet, they finally grasped the significance of the Dalai Lama's gesture.

In Inner Mongolia

Some days after his departure from Tashilhunpo monastery, the Panchen Lama turned the head of his white horse towards Inner Mongolia. He had left behind a letter explaining that he was going there to seek funds for the tax demanded by the Tibetan government, and to avoid creating difficulties between the 13th Dalai Lama and his

Cabinet.⁷ For several months he travelled about Gansu, granting audiences to the Mongolian princes who had travelled to meet him and who offered him tribute and assistance.⁸

The Republican Chinese government, having learned of the Panchen Lama's departure from Tibet, dispatched instructions to the warlords of China's northern provinces to locate him.⁹ Lu, the warlord of Gansu, tracked him down in Anxi district in April 1924. The main goal of China's Republican leaders, it must be recalled, was to bring about the unification of China's inland provinces with the peripheral borderlands. They calculated that the Panchen Lama, as a high-ranking figure in the Gelugpa hierarchy who exercised an undeniable spiritual influence on the Tibetans and the Mongols, could be used to pacify these people who had seceded from China in 1911 and whose territories stretched along China's entire north-western borders. As a result, the Chinese government decided to grant him special treatment. From the middle of 1924 until early 1935, the 6th Panchen Lama was placed under the protection of the local warlords, who took turns providing for his security and material requirements.

On 16 July 1924, President Caokun¹⁰ conferred upon him the title of 'Faithful Orator Devoted to the Propagation of Moral Values' (Chin: *Zhizhong chan-hua*).¹¹ After several insistent official invitations to visit Beijing, the 6th Panchen Lama finally accepted. He arrived on 17 January 1925 with a large escort.

He attended the preparatory session of the "National Reconstruction Meeting" (Chin: *Shanhou huiyi*) meant to identify ways and means of unifying the Chinese nation. He gave his first speech on this occasion:

... which is the most important issue that must be dealt with at this meeting? In the past, I think, high officials acted unjustly and caused much resentment, leading to war. The sacrifice of the soldiers' lives, the dilapidation of the nation's wealth were all provoked by self-centred high officials impressed by their own powers. From now on, all discord must cease, the disease of self-importance must be cured, we must repent and make amends. Only through sincerity can China find the right solution. The unity of the nationalities is of course an ideal that we all share. It will enable the state to prosper and the people to live happily and in peace. I feel that were high officials to adopt the basic principles of sincerity and the elimination of self-importance, national reconstruction would become an easy task.¹²

The 6th Panchen Lama did not attend the actual "National Reconstruction Meeting" held in February 1925 because he was giving a Green Tara teaching on Wutai Shan. His representative, Lobsang Gyaltzen, attended in his stead. The Chinese Republican leadership boasted of having created a large unified nation in which five nationalities (Chinese, Mongolian, Tibetan, Muslim and Manchu) lived harmoniously. The Panchen Lama may have wanted to trim their conceit. As a witness to Tibet's independence and to the constant warfare among the various Chinese warlords,¹³ he asked Lobsang Gyaltzen to read the following statement to the meeting:

(...) Nowadays China is issuing proclamations about the harmonious coexistence of the five nationalities, but in practice, I have observed that nothing has been done to avoid the emergence of mutual incomprehension

among the peoples of the borderlands. Can China's five peoples truly be unanimous in uniting, without any territorial discrimination? . . . The basic project of building a nation calls first of all for the extinction of local conflicts, and only then for the project to be implemented. War follows war in China today like weeds. After a prairie fire, they temporarily disappear but their roots remain in the soil and they sprout back again in springtime. . . .¹⁴ The wish to eradicate the underlying origins of regional conflicts will only be fulfilled if the people of the five nationalities, with a single heart unite their forces like brothers, like the five fingers of the hand, and defend and protect each other."¹⁵

In 1925 and 1926, the 6th Panchen Lama gave teachings at Chinese Buddhist monasteries in Peking and Wutai Shan. In August 1926, he was given a gold seal by the Chinese government and the title "Propagator of the Truth for the Sake of Beings" (Chin: *Xuanchengjishi*).¹⁶ Having witnessed the predatory armies of the various warlords he made numerous appeals for peace.

Starting in late 1926, the 6th Panchen Lama visited Inner Mongolia as the guest of the chiefs of the "Leagues" and "Banners", who requested him to give teachings. Between 1928 to 1930, he gave four Kalachakra initiations. Over 80,000 people attended each initiation.¹⁷

Different political movements had emerged in Inner Mongolia after the revolution. Groups that supported the ideas of the Chinese Nationalist Party had founded the Mongolian Nationalist Party¹⁸ in October 1925. Seeking to eliminate princely privileges, they wanted to create a more republican form of government in Mongolia and enjoy an autonomous status within the Republic of China. Buyantai was their leader and they enjoyed the support of the warlord Feng Yuxiang.

Other groups sought to maintain the privileges of the Mongol princes but accepted becoming an autonomous region of the Republic of China. Yet they desired to keep Mongolian culture alive and rejected assimilation into Chinese culture. Their leader was Prince De (or De Wang).

In 1928, Prince De tried to negotiate autonomous region status for Inner Mongolia with Chiang Kai-shek, after the Mongolian Nationalist Party was dissolved and a Chinese national government had been set up in Nanjing. But Chiang Kai-shek refused and carved up Inner Mongolia, creating several provinces, Jehol, Chahar, Suiyuan and Ningxia, which extended into the land of the "Leagues" and "Banners".¹⁹ A few months later, a group of dissenting Mongolians led by Unenbayin went to Nanjing for talks with the Republican Chinese authorities.²⁰ The Nationalist government did not respond to this gesture, trying instead to stifle Mongolian desires for autonomy.

The Mongolian and Tibetan Affairs Commission was reorganised. The Shanxi warlord, Yan Xishan, was appointed director. His province bordered Inner Mongolia in the north-west, and he favoured rapid colonisation of Mongol territory. The Commission opened offices all along the Chinese border with Mongolia and Tibet.

The agencies opened by the Panchen Lama between 1926 and 1930 in Nanjing, Chengdu, Tachienlu (Dartse-do, renamed Kangding in 1911) and Xining were incorporated into the structure of the Mongolian and Tibetan Affairs Commission. Correspondence from the Panchen Lama to the Chinese Nationalist government would go through one of these Offices, to the Commission on Mongolian and Tibetan Affairs

in Nanjing and from there to the State Council. The 6th Panchen Lama's agencies also provided support for his activities as a spiritual master and as a mediator in local conflicts. The Nationalist government's intention was to use the 6th Panchen Lama as an instrument to pacify Mongolian princes anxious to establish their autonomy. He was also a valuable observer sending important information to Nanjing on the political situation in Mongolia.

In March 1931, the Panchen Lama was invited to Nanjing to celebrate the anniversary of the establishment of the Nationalist Central government. He also gave teachings to lay Buddhist associations in Shanghai, and their members "became aware of their ignorance."²¹ He renewed the master-disciple relationship with Chinese politicians such as Dai Jitao, Minister for Education. On 5 May 1931, he took part in a "National Meeting" (Chin: *Guomin huiyi*) at which he spoke about the harmonious coexistence of nationalities and explained the political and religious system of the Tibetans. He met Chiang Kai-shek, who awarded him a seal engraved with the title "Great and Benevolent Master Panchen who protects the country and propagates its values" (Chin: *Huguo xuanhua guanghui dashi*) and a yearly subsidy of 120,000 yuan.²² Leaving Nanjing, the Panchen Lama returned to Mongolia, before actually receiving the seal.

From late 1931 onwards, the Panchen Lama stayed on Mongol territory, particularly at Bat-khaalagh monastery, the headquarters of the Mongolian nationalists.²³ The Japanese, after progressively encroaching on the Manchu provinces of Fengjian, Jilin and Heilongjiang, finally set up the state of Manchukuo in March 1932. The 6th Panchen Lama gave teachings at Bat-khaalagh to thousands of believers who joined him in reciting prayers for peace. At the end of the teachings, he warned the Mongols that they should unswervingly resist the Japanese invasion. For that purpose, he added, they would do well to ally themselves with the Chinese government.²⁴

The 6th Panchen Lama apprised the Chinese government of his success with the Mongols: how they were all prepared to unite among themselves and become Republican China's allies in order to resist Japan. Chiang Kai-shek's response was to send him the seal of "Great and Benevolent Master Panchen who Protects the Country and Propagates its Values" which he had left behind in Nanjing in March 1931, and another one engraved with the characters "Emissary for the Propagation of Values in the Western Regions" (Chin: *Xichui xuanhua shi*).²⁵ In July 1932, the 6th Panchen Lama gave a Kalachakra initiation at Bat-khaalagh monastery. Soon afterwards, the Japanese created an autonomous Mongolian province called Xing'an.²⁶ "They (the Japanese) tried every type of method to win over the Mongols, who remained unmoved. The teachings of the Panchen Lama gave them the fortitude to resist," a Chinese writer noted.²⁷

Prince De went to Nanjing to hold talks with the Chinese Nationalist authorities in October 1932. Lay Buddhist practitioners like Duan Qirui (interim President of the Republic of China from 24 November 1924 to 9 April 1926) had been inviting the 6th Panchen Lama to hold a Kalachakra initiation in Beijing since early 1932. At Beijing he met Prince De, and in October 1932 gave the Kalachakra at the Taihe Palace to about 60 to 70 thousand people.²⁸ His biographer refers to this as an "unprecedented event in China". Many Buddhist associations requested his teachings.²⁹ Moving on to Nanjing he multiplied his contacts with Buddhist groups in south China. After officially receiving the title of "Emissary for the Propagation of Values in the Western Regions", he returned to Inner Mongolia.

In the meantime, advised by the British, the 13th Dalai Lama reopened negotiations with the 6th Panchen Lama. He sent him a letter on 9th October 1932.³⁰ The Panchen Lama in return entrusted a ten-man delegation headed by Ngagchen Rinpoche with the task of travelling to Lhasa and making offerings to the Dalai Lama.³¹

A few days later, the Panchen Lama returned to Bat-khaalagh. Advancing in Inner Mongolia, the Japanese were about to occupy the province of Jehol. The apprehensive Mongols of Silingol and Ujümüçin Banners invited the Panchen Lama to visit their land and give teachings. Shi Qingyang, the director of the Mongolian and Tibetan Affairs Commission, fearing for the Panchen Lama's life, tried to dissuade him, but he ultimately accepted the Mongols' request.³² In late June 1933, the 13th Dalai Lama gave Ngagchen Rinpoche an audience in Lhasa. According to his biographer, "the 6th Panchen Lama was very happy".³³

Having given teachings on Silingol and Ujümüçin banner territory, the Panchen Lama returned to Prince De's estate, from where he sent a report to the Chinese government:

Since the loss of Jehol the Japanese have been actively plotting in Chahar and Suiyuan provinces and the existence of Inner Mongolia hangs by a thread (. . .) After reciting the Sutras and praying for the welfare of sentient beings, I gathered together the lay and religious leaders and comforted them with righteous words of advice. I explained to them with precision the benevolent policy of the central government and the intrigues of the unfriendly Japanese. Furthermore, I gave them true guidance so they may defend themselves, adapt to the will of the people and stimulate their enthusiasm. I made offerings to the monasteries. I asked the monks of the monasteries to hold great prayer meetings for the preservation of the country, to compile Buddhists texts in Tibetan, to obey the instructions of the Chinese government, to unite and resist the enemy and to support the Nationalist Party. The leaders of the banners understood the principles of Chinese policy and swore to sincerely support the central government, to energetically defend the national borders and their homelands so that the government project of uniting and assisting the people will achieve national unity (. . .) In conclusion, I urge the government to rapidly provide substantial assistance to the Mongolians. Otherwise, I fear it will be difficult for them to resist the enemy.³⁴

As the year 1933 drew to a close and the 6th Panchen Lama gave teachings in the territory of the Ujümüçin banner, all the princes and dukes of Mongolia met at Bat-kaalagh monastery to decide how to respond to Japanese incursion and the unremitting attack of the Chinese warlords. The Panchen Lama was invited to attend and lead the meeting.³⁵ The Chinese Republican government simultaneously sent him praise and encouraged him to promote its policies.³⁶ By the time the Panchen Lama arrived at Bat-khaalagh, the Mongols, disappointed by the failure of their powerful neighbour to send any assistance, had set up an autonomous government without permission from the Chinese authorities.³⁷ Thus they hoped to resist Japanese intrusion.

The Nanjing government immediately sent two officials, Huang Shaohong and Zhao Pilian, to negotiate with Prince De.³⁸ With the Panchen Lama acting as mediator, the Mongols and the government agents agreed on abandoning the principle of a

completely autonomous government in favour of regional autonomy under the control of the Chinese Republican government.³⁹ But on their return to Nanjing, the two Chinese officials published draft conditions different from that agreed at Bat-khaalagh with the Mongol princes. The Mongols voiced their displeasure. Unenbayin, the Mongol representative in Nanjing, proposed a new set of directives for the creation of a Political Affairs Commission for Autonomous Mongolia (Chin: *Difang zizhi zhengfu weiyuanhui*) that was approved by Chiang Kai-shek and was satisfactory to the Mongols.

The warlords of the northern provinces tried to break the agreement, for it went against their interests. Indeed, the new regulations gave the Mongols the right to levy a tax on goods in transit through Inner Mongolia.⁴⁰ These mostly belonged to the warlords. From the Japanese side came an offer to help the Mongols to achieve autonomy under Japanese protection.⁴¹

In China

The 13th Dalai Lama passed away in Lhasa on 17 December 1933. The Panchen Lama was deeply saddened by the news. He ordered prayers to be recited in all the monasteries of Tibet, Mongolia and China for the quick discovery of the reincarnation of the Dalai Lama. Chiang Kai-shek invited him to Nanjing to conduct funeral rites for the Dalai Lama.⁴² The Panchen Lama accepted the invitation and returned to the capital on 27 January 1934. He met President Lin Sen, held religious ceremonies to commemorate the memory of the 13th Dalai Lama and gave teachings to the various lay Buddhist associations of Nanjing.

Shortly after the death of the 13th Dalai Lama, the Panchen Lama decided to return to Tibet, if the Tibetan government would acquiesce to his requests. When he met the British minister, A. Cadogan, in Beijing in March 1934, he explained that he was waiting for Chinese government instructions before returning to his monastery.⁴³ The delegation led by Ngagchen Rinpoche that the Panchen Lama had sent to Lhasa returned to Beijing on 24 April 1934. Almost all the conditions put by the Panchen Lama for his return to Tibet had been rejected by the Lhasa authorities. His demands were the return of all the property confiscated in 1923 from Tashilhunpo monastery and its officials; the administration of Shigatse, Namling, Panam and Nakartse districts; control over the troops stationed in Tsang province; the right to train his own guards; the repayment of all the sums collected by the Lhasa government since 1923 as a special tax; and the intervention of a foreign mediator between the Lhasa government and himself.⁴⁴

Chinese Buddhist master Taixu and lay Buddhist practitioners like minister Dai Jitao invited the 6th Panchen Lama to give a Kalachakra initiation in Hangzhou, in Zhejiang province.⁴⁵ The 6th Panchen Lama accepted the invitation and conferred the initiation at Lingyin monastery in Hangzhou in May 1934.⁴⁶ He proceeded to Shanghai, where he encouraged various Buddhist lay practitioners including Duan Qirui (former interim President of the Republic of China) to found a Bodhi Study Association (Chin: *puti xuehui*) and an Institute for Mongolian and Tibetan Studies.⁴⁷ The Panchen Lama also toured Chinese warships at anchor in the port of Shanghai, the Jiangnan shipyards, the repair facility for aircraft and Shanghai's Navy hospital.⁴⁸

Many letters arrived from Tibet, calling on the Panchen Lama to return to the "Land of Snows".⁴⁹ A letter from a lama in Tashilhunpo monastery to the Mongolian and Tibetan Affairs Commission expressed the feelings of most people in Tibet:

In our humble opinion, the Panchen Lama only went from Tibet to Nanjing to disseminate the Buddhist religion, inform about Tibetan politics and consolidate the borders of the country; it is therefore not appropriate for him to remain permanently in Nanjing. When he left Tibet, the Panchen Lama declared that he would be back soon. Who would have thought that ten years would pass before his return? We are waiting for him like peasants whose fields are parched by drought impatiently hope for rain. Recently, a delegation led by Ngagchen Rinpoche came to Lhasa. Tibetans were reassured and hoped that the Panchen Lama would soon return and meet with the Dalai Lama; this is their dearest wish. Unfortunately, before the delegation had time to leave Lhasa, we learned that the Dalai Lama had passed away. The Tibetan people are orphaned. They have always looked upon the Dalai Lama and the Panchen Lama as their father and mother.⁵⁰

A Chinese mission led by Huang Musong visited Lhasa during the summer months of 1934 to convey the condolences of the Chinese government to the Tibetan government. Negotiations for the return of the 6th Panchen Lama were initiated with the Tibetan government. On his departure from Lhasa, Huang Musong left behind two Chinese officials with a radio set. One of them died shortly afterwards, but his colleague was able to keep the Chinese authorities informed of the Tibetan government's decisions concerning the 6th Panchen Lama.

The parties disagreed right away about the itinerary the Panchen Lama should follow on his way back. Were he to travel through Amdo, the Lhasa government worried that he might try to cross the Tibetan border with an escort of Chinese troops. The first condition of the Tibetan Cabinet was that the Panchen Lama leave Shanghai (or Hong Kong) by sea, sail to Calcutta and travel overland from Calcutta through Darjeeling to Tibet.⁵¹

On 11 August 1934, the 6th Panchen Lama returned to Inner Mongolia. He was escorted, on the way by Yan Xishan and Fu Zwyi, the "military governors" of Shanxi and Suiyuan. The two warlords sought his support for a new Autonomous Mongolian Commission they had set up with the blessing of the Chinese government, which no longer backed Prince De. At the request of the chiefs of different Mongolian Leagues and Banners, the Panchen Lama gave many teachings, including Kalachakra.⁵² In October and November 1934, Prince De invited him several times to teach at Bat-khaalagh monastery. The 6th Panchen Lama refused, for it would take him too far out of his way. He preferred to gradually drift towards central Tibet and work in Amdo and Kham (Xikang) before returning to his monastery.

In Amdo

The 6th Panchen Lama and his entourage headed west in Inner Mongolia, over the territory of the Alashan League, where they arrived on 29 January 1935. The Panchen Lama published the first issue of the *Official Review of the Emissary for the Propagation*

of *Values in the Western Regions* (Chin: *Xichui xuanhua shi yuekan*).⁵³ Furthermore, he sent his representatives to pay homage to Prince De and gave teachings in all the monasteries situated on Alashan Banner land. In March 1935, he sent a report to Huang Musong, the director of the Mongolian and Tibetan Affairs Commission.

As soon as I received the order to propagate values, I considered visiting the Western Regions. However, the instability of the borders made me tackle immediate concerns first. Therefore I first visited Inner Mongolia to propagate values among the leagues and banners, large and small, and to discharge my duties. The princes, the great Buddhist masters, the abbots of Inner Mongolia have all understood these values perfectly well. They support the central government and all want to resist foreign aggression and participate in daily life so that the people will enjoy peace and prosperity. This being said, I regret that values have not yet been propagated in the West. In Qinghai and Xikang, wars follow one another and the people remain in poverty. Help must be granted promptly. Were I to return immediately to Tibet, I would not only be going against the orders of the central government, I would also disappoint the people and offend against the Buddhist principle of rendering assistance to the greatest number of beings. Therefore, I intend to visit Qinghai in the coming days. I shall help in the restoration of devastated monasteries. I shall gather together the monks that have become scattered. I shall administer the property of the monasteries and shall see to respect for monastic discipline. Additionally, I shall strive to alleviate the suffering of the people and to propagate values (. . .).

In substance, he went on to suggest in his report that the Chinese government build roads in Amdo, Kham, Lhasa and other parts of Tibet and open post offices in the major districts, to facilitate “the Propagation of Values”. He also advised the creation of primary schools where both Tibetan and Chinese would be taught. Finally, he requested that the ministries of Communications and Education to be ordered to appoint experts and technicians to help carry out these projects.⁵⁴ The proposals of the Panchen Lama were discussed by the ministers concerned. Invoking budgetary constraints, they decided not to support him in order to avoid awakening Tibetan suspicions.⁵⁵

On 3 April 1935, baggage belonging to the Panchen Lama that had preceded him in Amdo was found to contain weapons. The Tibetan authorities impounded the weapons. Doubts and misgivings arose in all quarters.⁵⁶ The Panchen Lama left Ningxia for Lanzhou on 17 April 1935. In Nanjing, the Mongolian and Tibetan Affairs Commission presented the Executive Council of the Chinese government with a detailed plan for the 6th Panchen Lama’s return to Tibet. The Commission felt that: “With a view to the prestige of the 6th Panchen Lama, it would be appropriate to appoint a high official and detach troops to escort him to Tibet. Two Chinese squads will protect the 6th Panchen Lama. The first five hundred men will act as his personal guards. The second will escort the high official who will enter Tibet with the Panchen Lama. The escort will be composed of five hundred or a thousand men and forty officers. It will be mustered on the Qinghai-Tibet border. It will contact the armies of the military governors of Qinghai and Xikang.”⁵⁷

The high official, bearing the title of Special Emissary, would command the troops throughout the journey from China to Tibet. His mission was to protect the Panchen Lama, his property and his entourage from bandits, and also from the Japanese who controlled much of north China. Throughout the voyage, the special envoy was to examine the situation in the regions he traversed and disseminate the principles of the central government, including "the harmonious coexistence of the five nationalities."⁵⁸

On 10 May 1935, the Panchen Lama left Lanzhou for Yining, where he was met by troops belonging to Qinghai's military governor, Ma Bufang.⁵⁹ He arrived three days later at Kumbum monastery, where he engaged in active preparations for his return, for he planned to set out for Tibet in early July 1935. At the same time, he untiringly pursued his task of making propaganda for moral values, sending envoys to villages in Amdo and Kham and printing books in Chinese and in Tibetan to explain the principles of unity and the pacification of the border regions.⁶⁰ He circulated *the Official Review of the Emissary for the Propagation of Values in the Western Regions*.⁶¹ Last but not least, he taught the Buddhist doctrine.

In June 1935, the negotiations between the Tibetan government and the Panchen Lama had become deadlocked. The British government sent F. M. Williamson on a mission to Lhasa. His superiors had charged him with determining whether the Chinese living in Lhasa were permanent representatives of the Nanjing government, evaluating how the Tibetans would react if a British delegation were to take up residence in Lhasa to counterbalance the Chinese presence and discussing the matter of the Panchen Lama's return to Tibet directly with the Tibetan authorities. F. M. Williamson arrived in Lhasa on 26 August 1935. Soon afterwards, he met the members of the Tibetan Cabinet. The conversation can be summarised as follows: the Tibetan government was willing to return to the Panchen Lama ten of the districts confiscated after his departure in 1923, cancel the burden of the special tax and return the property of Tashilhunpo officials. However, the Panchen Lama would be assessed a small financial contribution for the establishment of the Tibetan army. Shigatse, Panam, Namling and Nakartse districts would not be returned. It was out of the question for the Panchen Lama to keep an army of his own, and neither independence nor autonomy would be entertained as regards Tashilhunpo.⁶² The Cabinet upheld its point-blank refusal to allow the Panchen Lama to cross the China-Tibet border in the company of a high Chinese official and a Chinese armed escort.⁶³

Ngagchen Rinpoche, who was conducting parallel negotiations with the Lhasa authorities, informed the Panchen Lama that the Tibetan authorities awaited him anxiously and that monks from the three great monasteries of Ganden, Drepung and Sera had started out on the journey to Amdo to meet him.⁶⁴ The Chinese government appointed Cheng Yun "Emissary in charge of escorting the Panchen Lama as far as Tibet".⁶⁵ The Panchen Lama continued his religious activities at Kumbum monastery in Amdo where he gave the Kalachakra initiations.⁶⁶ Despite the distance, he became more involved with the Bodhi Study Association he had founded in Shanghai, becoming its president.⁶⁷

In September 1935, the various Chinese officials who were to accompany the Panchen Lama arrived at Kumbum. The Tibetan government still denied the Chinese escort access to Tibet. According to the Chinese, it was F. M. Williamson who was influencing the Tibetan ministers.⁶⁸ In a letter, the British official urged the Panchen Lama to moderate his demands, but in vain.⁶⁹ F. M. Williamson died in Lhasa on

18 November 1935. His successor, Basil Gould, was entrusted with mediating between the Tibetan Cabinet and the 6th Panchen Lama.

Despite the obstacles that remained, the Panchen Lama decided to embark on his journey to Tibet. Farewell ceremonies were held at Kumbum monastery right up to his departure on 18 May 1936. He stopped at every monastery on the way to give teachings, arriving at Labrang Tashikhyil monastery on 14 June 1936, where he was met by the resident spiritual masters and monks as well as by representatives of the three major Gelugpa monasteries (Ganden, Drepung and Sera). He spent almost a year at Labrang Tashikhyil, giving religious teachings, finalising the details of his return voyage to Tibet and solving local conflicts in Inner Mongolia or Kham, where he sent his representatives. In July 1936 he conferred a Kalachakra initiation.

On 12 August 1936, envoy Cheng Yun, who had joined the Panchen Lama at Labrang Tashikhyil, was relieved of his responsibilities by the Chinese government for reasons that remain obscure. The Panchen Lama left Labrang Tashikhyil in the direction of Jyekundo on 21 August 1936. On the way, as was his custom, he stopped and taught in all the monasteries. He arrived at Jyekundo grubling monastery near Jyekundo on 18 December 1936. There he met Phabongkha, a great spiritual master from Central Tibet, who reassured him about his intervention with the Tibetan government: “. . . The close and less close members of the entourages of the Father and Son (the 13th Dalai Lama and the 6th Panchen Lama) have tried to sow discord by feigning faith and love. Today, at a time when the teachings are radiant and the power of the accumulated merits of sentient beings is flourishing, many signs indicate that doubts are dissipating, like glaciers that melt in the spring”. Some problems apparently remained, for the 6th Panchen Lama requested Phabongkha to perform rituals to eliminate obstacles.⁷⁰

The Reting regent, having been apprised of the situation by Phabongkha, tried to convince the reluctant Tibetan ministers: “I must successfully reconcile the government and the Panchen Lama. Although I have personally striven to accomplish this task, the members of the Assembly were not able to agree, for the Panchen Lama still has what is called an escort to accompany him. The members of the assembly think that the Panchen Lama has decided to return to his monastery in order to take advantage of the absence of the Dalai Lama”.⁷¹

As for the British, they urged the Chinese government to let the Panchen Lama enter Tibet without a Chinese escort.

In February 1937, the representatives of the Tibetan clergy who had been appointed to search for the reincarnation of the 13th Dalai Lama visited the Panchen Lama and requested his assistance.⁷² He was asked to indicate where the reincarnation of the 13th Dalai Lama would be found and to give the names of the various children he had selected. The Panchen Lama, who had undertaken to search on his own, chose three children born in Amdo. Members of his entourage joined the Tibetan representatives and travelled to Xining, the capital of Qinghai province. Two children were identified as potential reincarnations of the 13th Dalai Lama.⁷³ In the end, one of them was to become the 14th Dalai Lama.

Zhao Shouyu, the new “Emissary in charge of escorting the Panchen Lama” freshly appointed by the Chinese government, arrived in Jyekundo on 17 July 1937. Soon afterwards, the 6th Panchen Lama, his entourage, the emissary and the escort prepared to start on their journey. After much deliberation, the Tibetan Cabinet had

authorised the Panchen Lama to enter Tibet with his Chinese escort, with the proviso that the escort avoid entering Lhasa altogether and depart from Tibet after no more than a five-month period in Tsang province.⁷⁴ As for the other issues under negotiation, the Cabinet proposed to settle them once the 6th Panchen Lama had returned to Tashilhunpo. On 15 August 1937, the Panchen Lama left Jyekundo, crossing the Sino-Tibetan border soon afterwards.

Suddenly, on 26 August 1937, the Chinese authorities ordered the Panchen Lama to halt and postpone his voyage because of the commencement of the war of resistance against Japan.⁷⁵ On 1 September 1937, the Panchen Lama sent a confirmation to the Tibetan government concerning the terms of their agreement. On 6 September, the Chinese informed the Panchen Lama that his entry into Tibet with the escort would be detrimental to their relations with England, for the British had always looked askance at the prospects of Chinese soldiers arriving at Tashilhunpo, and the Chinese government could not afford to offend the British since war with Japan had now broken out in earnest. He therefore decided to postpone his journey to Tibet for a few months, confirming his decision on 26 September. It remained to decide where he would spend the intervening period, until he could confirm a new date for his departure. Liu Wenhui, the military governor of Xikang, invited him to live in Jyekundo. His abbots advised him to return to Kumbum monastery and wait there for a propitious moment for a fresh departure. The Chinese government finally chose Dartsedo as his residence. The 6th Panchen Lama headed for Jyekundo first.

In early November, the 6th Panchen Lama had a first bout of ill-health. His condition deteriorated rapidly despite the ministrations of Tibetan and Chinese doctors. He died on 1 December 1937. It was not until 4 February 1941 that his mortal remains were finally brought to rest at Tashilhunpo monastery, after so many journeys and so many adventures.

Notes

* Corrections, most significantly in this date, have been made to the original article by the author.

- 1 Some foreigners managed to visit Tibet in the nineteenth century: Thomas Manning reached Lhasa in 1811, French missionaries Huc and Gabet arrived in 1846.
- 2 C. Bell, *Tibet Past and Present* (New Delhi: Asian Publications, 1992), p. 84.
- 3 T. W. Shakabpa, *Bod kyi srid don rgyal rabs* (Kalimpong, 1976), vol. 11, p. 237.
- 4 In 1792, when the Nepali Gurkhas overran Tibet's borders and looted Tashilhunpo, the Tibetan army had come to the rescue. In turn, Tashilhunpo had accepted to subsidise one quarter of the Tibetan government's military budget.
- 5 Don khang, Skal bzang Bde-skyid, "Pan chen sku phreng dgu pa mes rgyal nang khul du gsang phebs kyi snga rjes" (Discussion of the dispute between the 6th Panchen Lama and the Tibetan government), in *Bod ljongs chab gros rig gnas lo rgyus dpyad gzhi'i rgyu cha zhib 'jug u yon lhan khang* (Lhasa: People's Publishing House, 1984), p. 2.
- 6 C. Bell, *Portrait of a Dalai Lama; the Life and Times of the Great Thirteenth*, pp. 347–348.
- 7 Letter written by the 6th Panchen Lama before leaving Tibet. Indian Office Records (IOR).
- 8 Chen Wenjian, *Banchan dashi dong lai shiwu nian dashiji* (Important notes taken for fifteen years after Great Master Panchen came to the East) (Chongqing, 1943, February 1924), p. 1.
- 9 Chinese Ministry of Foreign Affairs to Military Strategist Ma, telegram, 25 March 1924.
- 10 Caokun was President of China from 10 October 1923 to 2 November 1924.
- 11 Chen Wenjian, *op. cit.*, P. 2 and Liu Jiaju, *Banchan Dashi quanji* (Complete works of Grand Master Panchen), 1943, p. 38.

- 12 Chen Wenjian, *op. cit.*, p. 5.
- 13 For example, the 6th Panchen Lama intervened to pacify the situation when Liu Zhenhua's troops fought those of Hu Jingyi, Chen Wenjian, *op. cit.*, September 1924, p. 2.
- 14 Statement of the Panchen Lama read out on 1 February 1925 to the "National Reconstruction Meeting" in Beijing.
- 15 *Ibid.*
- 16 Liu Jiaju, *op. cit.*, p. 39.
- 17 On 15 April 1928, the 6th Panchen Lama gave the Kalachakra initiation at Yangwang monastery and in July 1928 at Jastu monastery in eastern Ujümüqin banner. On 15 April 1929, he conferred it at Bat khaalagh monastery on the land of the Ulançab banner and on 11 August 1929 on western Ujümüqin banner territory.
- 18 This Party merged with the Chinese Nationalist Party in 1927.
- 19 Sechin Jagchid, "Inner Mongolia Under Chinese Occupation, 1935–1945, an Eye-witness Report", in *Zentral Asiatische Studien* (Weisbaden: Otto Harrassowitz, 1987) and Owen Lattimore, "The Eclipse of Inner Mongolian Nationalism", in *Studies in Frontier History Collected Papers, 1928–1938* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1961), p. 427.
- 20 P. Hyer, "Demchugdungrub: Nationalist Leader in Inner Mongolia's Confrontation with China and Japan", in *3rd International Congress of Human Sciences in Asia and South Africa* (1976), p. 68.
- 21 Chon Wenjian, *op. cit.*, p. 13.
- 22 Liu Jiaju, *op. cit.*, p. 44.
- 23 Liu Jiaju, *op. cit.*, p. 46.
- 24 Chen Wenjian, *op. cit.*, 15.2.1932 and Srung Kri Hru'u, "Pan chen sku phreng dgu pa dbus gtsang dang zhal bral ba dang dbus gtsang du phyir phebs gnang ba'i skor bshad pa" (The relations of the 6th Panchen Lama with central Tibet and his voyage to central Tibet) in *Mtsho sngon gyi rig gnas dang lo rgyus dpyad gzhi'i yig rigs 'dem sgrig*, no. 1 (1984) p. 120.
- 25 Chen Wenjian, *op. cit.*, p. 16, 13 April 1932 and 19 April 1932.
- 26 Owen Lattimore, *op. cit.*, p. 430.
- 27 Chen Wenjian, *op. cit.*, p. 18.
- 28 Chen Wenjian, *op. cit.*, p. 20.
- 29 Chen Wenjian, *op. cit.*, p. 20, 26 November 1932.
- 30 IOR, L/P&S/12/4174.
- 31 Chen Wenjian, *op. cit.*, p. 25, 13 February 1933.
- 32 Chen Wenjian, *op. cit.*, p. 28, 23 May 1933.
- 33 Liu Jiaju, *op. cit.*, p. 50, 26 June 1933.
- 34 On 21 August 1933, the Mongolian and Tibetan Affairs Commission transmitted to the State Council a telegram from the Panchen Lama setting out the situation among the Western Mongolians as regards propaganda.
- 35 Chen Wenjian, *op. cit.*, p. 34, 15 October 1933.
- 36 Chen Wenjian, *op. cit.*, p. 34, 18 October 1933.
- 37 Chen Wenjian, *op. cit.*, p. 36, 14 November 1933.
- 38 Sechin Jagchid, "The Inner Mongolian Autonomous Movement Of the 1930's" in *Essays in Mongolian Studies* (David M. Kennedy Center for International Studies, Brigham Young University, 1988), p. 286, and Chen Wenjian, *op. cit.*, p. 36, 15 November 1933.
- 39 Chen Wenjian, *op. cit.*, p. 36, 17 November 1933. Panchen Lama's statement to the Mongolian princes at Bat-khaalagh monastery on 25 October 1933.
- 40 Sechin Jagchid (1988), *op. cit.*, pp. 285–287.
- 41 Sechin Jagchid (1988), *op. cit.*, pp. 290–91; Chen Wenjian, *op. cit.*, p. 31, 22 July 1933 and 4 September 1933.
- 42 Chen Wenjian, *op. cit.*, p. 38, 26.12.1933.
- 43 IOR, L/P&S/12/4181, 9 March 1934 and Liu Jiaju, *op. cit.*, p. 51.
- 44 IOR, L/P&S/12/4181, 8 January 1934.
- 45 Chen Wenjian, *op. cit.*, p. 42, 10 April 1934.
- 46 Chen Wenjian, *op. cit.*, p. 43, 14 May 1934, whereas Liu Jiaju gives 25 May 1934.
- 47 Chen Wenjian, *op. cit.*, p. 44, 23 May 1934 and Liu Jiaju, *op. cit.*, p. 53, 31 May 1934.
- 48 Chen Wenjian, *op. cit.*, p. 45, 2 June 1934.

- 49 Srung Kri Hru'u, *op. cit.*, p. 121.
- 50 Tengye (Tingkye) Rinpoche of Tashilhunpo monastery to the Mongolian and Tibetan Affairs Commission, telegram, 15 May 1934.
- 51 Jiang Zhiyu, the Chinese representative in Lhasa, to the Executive Council, telegram, 26 July 1934.
- 52 On 7 September 1934, the 6th Panchen Lama taught Kalachakra at Anfu monastery on the territory of the Qanggin banner.
- 53 The title of "Emissary for the Propagation of Values in the Western Regions" had been conferred by Chi-ang Kai-shek in April 1932.
- 54 6th Panchen Lama to the Mongolian and Tibetan Affairs Commission, 9 March 1935.
- 55 Gao Zhangzhu to the Mongolian and Tibetan Affairs Commission, report, 24 May 1935.
- 56 Chiang Kai-shek to Wang Jingwei, order, 8 April 1935; Chen Wenjian, *op. cit.*, p. 53, 3 April 1935.
- 57 Mongolian and Tibetan Affairs Commission to the Executive Council: proposal for the return of the Panchen Lama to Tibet, 18 April 1935.
- 58 State Council to the Mongolian and Tibetan Affairs Commission, transmitting documents relevant to the constitution of the Special Envoy's escort, order, 10 August 1935.
- 59 Chen Wenjian, *op. cit.*, p. 56, 19 May 1935.
- 60 Chen Wenjian, *op. cit.*, p. 57, 9 June 1935.
- 61 Chen Wenjian, *op. cit.*, p. 57, 12 June 1935.
- 62 IOP, L/P&S/12/4175, Basil Gould's report about the Williamson mission.
- 63 Jiang Zhiyu to the Mongolian and Tibetan Affairs Commission, reporting on his meeting with the ministers of the Tibetan Cabinet, telegram, document 149.
- 64 Liu Jiaju, *op. cit.*, p. 57, 16 August 1935.
- 65 Chen Wenjian, *op. cit.*, p. 60, 17 August 1935.
- 66 Chen Wenjian, *op. cit.*, p. 61, 29 August 1935.
- 67 Chen Wenjian, *op. cit.*, p. 64, 12 November 1935.
- 68 Jiang Zhiyu to the Executive Council, report, 12 September 1935.
- 69 IOR, L/P&S/12/4175, B.
- 70 Blo bzang Rdo rje, 'Dan ma. *Rigs dang dkyil 'khor rgya mtsho'i khyab bdag he ru ka dpal ngur smrig gar rol skyabs gcig pha bong kha pa bde chen snying po 'dpal bzang po'i rnam par thar pa don ldan tshangs pa'i dbyangs snyan* (Phabongkha's Biography), New Delhi, 1981, folios 610B–615B.
- 71 Phabongkha's Biography, folio 622A.
- 72 Chen Wenjian, *op. cit.*, p. 83, 17 February 1937.
- 73 Chen Wenjian, *op. cit.*, p. 60, 7 May 1937.
- 74 Chen Wenjian, *op. cit.*, p. 90, 1 August 1937.
- 75 Chen Wenjian, *op. cit.*, p. 92, 26 August 1937.

SOVIET RUSSIA AND TIBET

A debacle of secret diplomacy

Alexandre Andreyev

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Relations between Soviet Russia and Tibet in the decade following the Bolshevik coup have been practically untouched so far by scholars either Western or Russian. This is mainly because all information about them was deliberately suppressed in Soviet sources for political reasons. Even today the bulk of documentary evidence relating to Moscow's secret dealings with the Dalai Lama, as well as other leading Tibetans, preserved in the diplomatic archives (the Foreign Policy Archive in Moscow), remains classified and is not released for research. However, by thoroughly investigating the available sources both in Russia and Great Britain, the author was able to gain an insight into the workings of Soviet secret diplomacy and thus to reconstruct the main features of the intriguing Moscow-Lhasa dialogue which lasted for a period of 6 years, between 1922 and 1928.

Soviet leaders began to consider establishing a relationship with the Lhasa government as early as 1918–1919 when the new regime was in the midst of a strict diplomatic and economic blockade. The initiative came from Narkomindel – the People's Commissariat for Foreign Affairs, headed by C. V. Chicherin. Soviet foreign Policy in those days and ever since was profoundly revolution-inspired and revolution-oriented, so that while making its overtures to the East, Narkomindel was actually seeking to liberate the peoples of Asia from foreign domination, primarily that of the "British imperialists".

The Bolsheviks switched to a "policy of resolute and dynamic action in the East" (in Leon Trotsky's words) shortly after the republic of Turkestan was re-united with Soviet Russia at the closing stages of the civil war. As a result, Red Turkestan was made into a major centre for extending Soviet influence into the contiguous territories of Moslem lands such as Turkey, Persia, Bokhara, Khiva, Afghanistan, and farther to the east to Western China (Sinkiang), Tibet and British India. This southward drive of Bolshevism which went under popular slogans of national liberation and self-determination, however met with strong resistance by the British who saw it as a direct menace to their vital interests in the same part of Asia. This immediately revived the old Anglo-Russian rivalry which became particularly severe in the "buffer zone area" (Persia, Afghanistan and Tibet) insulating British India from subversive Bolshevik influence. It is no surprise then that these three countries were given most

serious attention by Moscow contemplating avenues of approach to the “strongest bulwark of world imperialism.”

The Bolsheviks made no secret of the ultimate goal of their Eastern policy which was the expulsion of the British from Asia. It was with this goal in view that Trotsky (then war minister) made plans in August 1919 to set up a major military base in Turkestan for launching an attack against India via Afghanistan to aid the Indian revolution.^{1a} A few weeks earlier (on July 14), two leading Kalmyk Bolsheviks, Arashi Chapchaev (Chairman of the Kalmyk Central Executive Committee, or TsIK) and Anton Amur-Sanan (head of the Kalmyk section of the Narcomnats or Commissariat for Nationalities) sent a memorandum to Lenin in which they proposed to dispatch a small military force camouflaged as a peaceful Buddhist pilgrims’ caravan to a north-eastern stretch of the Indian border in the Nepal-Sikkim-Bhutan area, via Mongolia and Tibet. (This incidentally was timed to coincide with the anticipated resumption of hostilities between the British and Afghans fighting a war in the north-western borderland). The Red Army contingent, by their sudden appearance at a spot where they would be least of all expected, would throw the British Indian authorities into a panic, so the Kalmyks believed. The same men were also to carry weapons to the peoples of the above border states apparently to rouse them against their British oppressors. The proposal of Chapchaev-Amur-Sanan was approved by Lenin but it was not realized mainly because the Bolsheviks were cut off from the East Siberia and Mongolia by the civil war.^{1b}

Judging by the document, the Soviet leaders took interest in Tibet at this stage not so much because they conceived the possibility of a revolution there, but simply because the Buddhist country seemed to provide a convenient channel for spreading revolutionary propaganda among the Indian border tribes, and also for supplying them with arms for use against the British. The more so that the Moslem route via Afghanistan proved a very difficult one as the vigilant British intelligence raised cordons against the Bolshevik agitators and exiled Indian revolutionaries based in Afghanistan and Soviet Turkestan, along the north-western frontiers of the country. It is easy to see that the Soviet focus in 1919 was largely on the two “mutinous provinces” of India – Punjab and Bengal – to be approached from two different directions, by a Moslem and a Buddhist route accordingly.

The advantages of the latter was briefly outlined by Amur-Sanan in a newspaper article of May 1919. According to him, the Kalmyks could play a key role in “transmitting the idea of the Soviet government to the millions of the Mongol-Buddhist tribes” related to them by blood, religion, and language, as well as to Tibet, connected with Mongolia geographically and by religious ties, so that it “could likewise fall into the Soviet sphere of influence.” On the other hand, “Tibet borders on India – this, then is the way by which India could establish contact with the center of world revolution – Russia,” concluded Amur-Sanan.²

This new scheme highlighted the importance of the remote Himalayan realm which until then lay on the periphery of Soviet interest. Petersburg remained isolated from Lhasa since 1914, by which time Russia and Great Britain had conveniently secured their spheres of influence on the outskirts of the collapsed Chinese Empire: Russia recognized the priority of British interests in Tibet, whereas Great Britain did the same with regard to Russian interests in Outer Mongolia. The century-long competition of the two great imperialistic powers on the Asiatic continent seemed to have

been finally eliminated, but then the Bolshevik revolution occurred which put an end to a Russo-British understanding by challenging the territorial acquisitions of the British and other “world imperialists.”

The Bolshevik leaders were bold enough to repudiate from the very start all treaties previously concluded by the Tsarist government (including the 1907 Anglo-Russian convention concerning Persia, Afghanistan and Tibet which according to Chicherin, “placed Tibet under the English sway”). By doing so they made it clear that they were not going to reckon with conventional diplomacy which basically served the “imperialists’ interests.” Yet their own “open and honest diplomacy” was all too soon to resort to the same “conspiratorial methods” and “underhanded dealings” of the much-despised bourgeois diplomacy they themselves publicly rejected.

Diplomacy began to play a more active role in Bolsheviks’ expansionist schemes after they failed to quickly foment revolution in Khiva, Persia, Bokhara and Afghanistan. As Trotsky cynically put it in his letter to Chicherin in 1920 “. . . a potential Soviet revolution in the East is now advantageous to us chiefly as a major item of diplomatic barter with England.”³ It is in this context that one should assess the Soviet attempts to reopen dialogue with Lhasa.

Chicherin, however, would have hardly achieved anything in his far reaching designs without a reliable go-between, someone known to and more importantly, trusted by the theocratic rulers in Lhasa. The man was a learned Buryat lama Agwan Dorjiev (1853-1938)⁴ formerly the Dalai Lama’s favorite and chief advisor. His persistent mediation work as the latter’s representative in Tsarist Russia and strong anti-British sentiments made his services indispensable.

In late autumn of 1920 Narkomindel jointly with the Far-Eastern Secretariat of Comintern (Third Communist International) decided to dispatch “a reconnaissance expedition” to Lhasa which was to explore the ground for establishing diplomatic relations between the Soviet and Tibetan governments. According to Dorjiev, the mission was:

to sound out the internal situation in Tibet, to ascertain the character of Tibet’s relations with neighboring countries, especially England, as well as to determine the strength of English influence and that of other diplomatic intriguers in Tibet . . . If the expedition succeeded, it should be followed by another, bigger one that would carry a radio set, a cinematographic projector and some weapons for the Tibetan army.⁵

Dorjiev’s memorandum was submitted to Narkomindel in July 1921, precisely at the time when the British mission of Charles Bell, Political Officer in Sikkim, was staying in Lhasa. Dorjiev must have known about it from a group of Kalmyk monks who had returned from Tibet earlier that year. Thus the Bolshevik mission was to try to find out the results of Bell’s negotiations with the Lhasa authorities.

The first “Lhasa expedition” of the Bolsheviks consisted of 8 men – 6 Kalmyks and 2 Buryats who, for reasons of security, posed as Mongolian pilgrims. Nominally it was headed by a Buryat lama Dava Yampilon, however its real leader who was to conduct all political negotiations in Lhasa was a Kalmyk cavalry commander and Bolshevik propagandist Vasily Khomutnikov.⁶ He was serving then in Urga with a large group of other Red Army instructors who volunteered to help their Mongolian brethren stage “a people’s revolution.”

The Soviet mission set out from Urga on September 13, by joining an outgoing caravan of Mongolian and Tibetan pilgrims and traders.⁷ It arrived in Lhasa on April 9, 1922 and stayed there for 3 weeks, until May 1st. During this time the "Red Russians," as they were known to the Tibetans, were received in several audiences by the Dalai Lama and some of the highest government officials, including Lonchen Sholkhang and Tsarong Shape, Commander-in-Chief of the Tibetan army. The person who arranged the reception of the delegation and later served as interpreter at the discussion was the Dalai Lama's secretary, a Kalmyk scholar-monk from the Don region (actually Khomutnikov's fellow villager), Lupsan Sherap Tepkin.

The mission, as was customary, offered the Dalai Lama at their first blessing audience some presents on behalf of the Soviet government – 100 arshins of fine brocade, (1 arshin is 0.71 m – A. A.), 4 gold watches, a beautiful tea service and a radio-telegraph set. The Dalai seemed pleased, yet it did not preclude him from expressing straightforwardly his great concern about his Buddhist coreligionists in Soviet Russia, the Buryats and Kalmyks, who, as was then widely rumored, were being persecuted by the Bolsheviks. He also enquired about Agwan Dorjiev, "whether he was not shot by the Soviets." Khomutnikov did his best to allay the apprehension of the Tibetan Sovereign by telling him that the Russian Buddhists were enjoying the broadest religious freedoms in accordance with the new legislation. As to the lama's former envoy in Russia, he was alive and doing well under the new regime. As proof of this he handed a letter from Dorjiev to his High Patron and another one from the Soviet government, signed by Chicherin's assistant L. M. Karakhan. The Dalai Lama was seemingly reassured and things went much smoother after that.

He asked the Kalmyks if Soviet Russia could assist Tibet against any encroachments of foreign powers, to which the latter replied emphatically that "the Tibetan people can fully rely on Soviets assistance and support." He further did not miss the opportunity to eulogize the invincible Red Army which defeated all its enemies during the civil war. Then the Dalai Lama came up with some specific requests – he wanted to know if Russia could lend them any experts in gun-powder, cartridges and shell manufacturing (the Tibetans could not get this kind of expertise from Great Britain), as well as radio-telegraphists "to operate that wonderful machine." Khomutnikov, of course, did not hesitate to promise the assistance needed.

It was at the third farewell audience only, which took place on April 29, that Khomutnikov was able to address the Dalai Lama with his own questions and requests and he conveyed to him Narkomindel's desire to have his own official embassy in Moscow so that normal diplomatic relations between the two countries could be established. The lama, however turned down the proposal by saying that this might lead to serious complications with the British (which may indicate to his continued commitment to the 1914 Shimla Anglo-Tibetan convention). Yet he agreed to dispatch his personal representative Sherap Tepkin instead. Tepkin was to deliver his verbal message to the Soviet leaders in reply to their letter. He was also to carry three letters to Agwan Dorjiev to be further handed over to Narkomindel (one of these seems to have reconfirmed Dorjiev's credentials as "Tibetan ambassador" to Russia). Through this cunning arrangement the Dalai Lama evidently sought to avoid any direct communication with the Soviet. There was yet another task assigned to Tepkin – he was to ascertain how things really stood in Bolshevik Russia and whether Buddhists there were being persecuted. In general, Tepkin was to assist Dorjiev, already an old

man, and in case of his death, to take over his diplomatic functions. At the end of the audience, the Dalai Lama allegedly told Khomutnikov frankly:

I am desirous to establish good neighborly relations with Russia, since though formally there exists amity between us and England, she in fact wants to subjugate us. For this reason she has her troops stationed on our territory which is quite annoying and completely undesirable for us.⁸

The Khomutnikov mission (Lama Yampilon died on his way to Tibet) returned to Russia via India in September 1922. Though nothing much was achieved by it, Chicherin must have been content. Anyway, he did not anticipate any quick progress from this first contact with the theocratic Lhasa. The diplomatic breakthrough of 1921, when Soviet Russia concluded several agreements of recognition and friendship with Eastern countries (Persia, Afghanistan, Turkey, Mongolia) and more importantly, signed a trade agreement with Great Britain which amounted to a *de-facto* recognition of the Bolshevik state by a foremost European power, could not but raise the hopes of the Soviet leadership. Yet relations with Tibet remained a particularly delicate issue for Soviet diplomacy mainly due to unsettled relations between Tibet and China.

The Soviets readily acknowledged Tibet's virtual independence from China as a result of the Chinese revolution of 1911 and verbally supported its claims to self-determination, but they were certainly reluctant to admit the country's full sovereignty, knowing that this would have antagonized the Peking government, even though the latter had no control over the entire territory of the former Manchu Empire, including the outlying provinces of Sinkiang and Tibet. Besides Moscow was seeking to normalize its own relations with Peking, and the Peking authorities always saw Tibet as an integral part of China. However, the upsurge of the revolutionary movement in south China under the leadership of the Kuomintang in the early 1920s seems to have given a new perspective to the Sino-Tibetan settlement: the future of Tibet would lie with the re-united and liberated Red China of Sun Yat-sen. This was a far better solution for Moscow than to have a fully sovereign Tibetan state that might easily slip into the hands of the British. The Soviets were even prepared to go as far as "to safeguard Tibet's security" through an Anglo-Russian agreement with China's participation, but this, of course, would have to be concluded on "federal basis," i.e. by incorporating Tibet into the projected Chinese Federation.

The Bolshevik scheme in Tibet at this juncture was to align the anti-British (pro-Chinese) elements in Tibet with the nationalist (anti-imperialist) movement in the south of China. (Concurrently Moscow would try to bring forth the alignment of the Mongolian revolutionaries with the Kuomintang nationalists). Thus the competitive British penetration into Tibet was a disturbing factor for the Soviets. According to Khomutnikov's intelligence, there were numerous Sikkimese subjects in Tibet working as military instructors, as well as Hindu traders from Bengal and Nepal who were believed to be disguised British agents. Yet at the same time Khomutnikov testified to a generally hostile attitude of the Tibetan lamas and popular masses to the British. His report mentioned an uprising raised by the pro-Chinese monks of the two Lhasa monasteries, supposedly against the British representative Charles Bell⁹ (which seemed to be a reference to a major confrontation between clergy and the new Anglophile

military which took place at the Great Prayer Festival, Mönlam Chenmo, in Lhasa in early 1921). Apart from that Khomutnikov was unable to detect any signs of social ferment (or "class struggle" to use the Marxist idiom) which the Bolsheviks could use to their ends. This certainly dashed Comintern's hopes for gaining a foothold in Tibet. Yet some anti-British resentment in the monasteries was clearly a factor which could help the Bolsheviks to counter British influence on the Lhasa political scene.

Shortly after Khomutnikov and Tepkin arrived in Moscow, Narkomindel dispatched their courier to Lhasa, a Kalmyk gelong Sanje Bakbushev, a former student of the Drepung monastery. Being personally known to the Dalai Lama, he was to deliver to him and his ministers replies from the Soviet government.

Bakbushev returned to Moscow with more communications from Lhasa in late summer 1923. In the meantime, Narkomindel was already making plans for its "second Tibetan expedition." Judging by Chicherin's confidential correspondence with the Politburo he was under the impression that Khomutnikov's earlier mission had succeeded in completely dispelling the ill-feelings of the Lhasa authorities towards the Bolsheviks and had even aroused in them some sympathy for the world's first "workers' government". The head of the "progressive party," Tsarong Shape, was believed to be willing "to orientate himself on Russia." The Dalai Lama likewise "began to show his strong inclination towards us" (the Soviets). Therefore the second Lhasa mission was to give another boost to the incipient Soviet-Tibetan rapprochement by "strengthening the ties" between the two countries. What Chicherin wanted primarily at this stage was to set up "an official Soviet representation in Lhasa," which would maintain "permanent friendly relations with the Tibetan government." However, in view of the "feverish activity" generated by England in Tibet in the past few years, he believed it would be expedient to create such a representation only if the British attempted to establish their diplomatic agency in Lhasa, and not otherwise.¹⁰

The Dalai Lama, in his letter to Chicherin, dated May 5 1923, which Bakbushev brought to Moscow, assured the Soviet "narcom" that "there are no representatives of England or any other state in Lhasa at the present time" and that "if there will be any representation or expedition from Russia stationed in Lhasa, England and other state will hasten to do the same, and it will be difficult to refuse them." Therefore the Dalai Lama suggested that Chicherin find some other "wise means of establishing communication and renewing the former friendship between the two countries."¹¹ Thus the idea of installing a Soviet official in Lhasa had to be dropped by Narkomindel, at least for the time being.

The friendly letters from the Dalai Lama led the Soviets to believe that Lhasa, apprehensive of aggressive aspirations of its British protectors was now seeking an alliance with Moscow. However this was only wishful thinking on the part of Narkomindel, or rather Chicherin, the chief plotter of the Soviet "Tibetan scheme". In spite of his inconspicuous flirtation with Moscow, the Dalai Lama still kept orientating his policy towards closer ties with London. In fact, his modernization program, started in the same years, would not be possible without British co-operation. As a result of an agreement with Charles Bell, Great Britain assisted the Tibetan government to introduce many innovations such as a police force, munitions and hydro-electricity. The British constructed a telegraph line (from Gyantse to Lhasa) to establish a direct telegraph link with India. They opened a school for children in

Gyantse and helped the Tibetans in the development of their mineral resources. But, crucially, they supplied arms and ammunition to Tibet, helping it to develop a strong and efficient army.

Moscow followed British success in Tibet rather jealously by responding to it with occasional propagandist diatribes in the mass media, accusing its rival of pursuing a policy, aimed “at forced annexation” of Tibet. At the same time it was trying to find some means of extending its own influence in Lhasa. This attached great importance to Narkomindel’s covert missions to the Buddhist Mecca, providing the only communication link between the Soviet and Tibetan governments.

Chicherin’s proposal for the second “Tibetan expedition” which was to give a more practical dimension to Soviet-Tibetan understanding was approved by the Politburo on August 9 1923. The expedition, mounted in Urga later that year, was headed by S. S. Borisov, a Narkomindel official, who was assisted by Bayarto Vampilon (the former an Altaic Turk, the latter a Buryat). Borisov is known to be the man who organized the first revolutionary cells in Urga in 1919, and later worked for some time in the Eastern Secretariats of Comintern. Other important participants were the Buryats Dybchin Molonov, a student of the Communist University of the Eastern Labourers, Dashi Sampilon, then councillor of the Mongolian Legation in Moscow, F. V. Bakhanov, a professional photographer, Jigme Dodi (Barduev), a lama from the Atsagat datsan in Buryatia, and Bulat Mukharain – the mysterious “Po-lo-te” or the “Fat Mongolian” of British records – a trade expert who would later be attached to the Soviet Trade Representation in Urga.

The main issues to be discussed by the mission with the Dalai Lama dealt with potential Soviet assistance to Tibet, such as military aid (the sale of arms and munitions, and the provision of military instructors), education of Tibetan students in the Soviet Union, and promotion of trade (barter), presumably through the agency of Mongolia. It is not difficult to see that the Soviet initiatives were in fact no different from those of the British, and if successful, were to supersede the competing British assistance provided to the country. In pursuance of Chicherin’s scheme, Borisov was also instructed to “unmask English machinations” in the eyes of the leading Tibetans, so as to “prevent English troops from penetrating Tibet.”¹²

The Borisov mission was still on its way to Lhasa when the Soviet daily *Izvestiya* carried a report in May 1924 speaking of the incursion of English troops in Tibet. The source of the information was allegedly a telegram received by the Tibetan deputies in Peking. The paper asserted that

The Tibetans are highly incited against the English, and the people are begging the Dalai Lama on their knees to drive out the English. The behavior of the English soldiers towards the population is abominable. The Dalai Lama has at last understood the true position but is powerless to alter it. He has nevertheless refused the English demand for the grant of concessions for the exploitation of the mineral riches of Tibet.¹³

The report, obviously a propagandist fraud, seems to have been intended to prepare the public opinion in the country for unwelcome developments in Tibet, whether imaginary or real, and ultimately provided a good pretext for possible Soviet involvement in Tibetan affairs.

The Borisov mission arrived in Lhasa on August 1 1924, at the time when the British mission of Major F. M. Bailey, Political Officer in Sikkim, was also visiting there. This must have been a mere coincidence as Bailey's visit to Lhasa was arranged by the British Indian authorities with the Dalai Lama in early spring of that year, that is, when Borisov had already left Urga. Still the Soviets expected some British agents in Lhasa, as is suggested by one of Chicherin's memos to the Politburo, for which reason Borisov and Vampilon were issued special mandates by Narkomindel, entitling both to act as official Soviet representatives.

Borisov and his companion, disguised as Mongolian pilgrims, were immediately spotted by Bailey through one of his local informants, a Kalmyk emigre monk Zangpo Haldinov (Zambo Khaglyshev in Soviet sources), and he promptly took measures to turn the Bolshevik agents out of Lhasa, by pointing out to the Dalai Lama and the Shapas the danger of the Bolshevik intrigue. His warnings had seriously alarmed the Tibetan government by making them "intensely suspicious of all travellers from the north and determined to keep Bolshevism out of their country," as Bailey wrote to C. Latimer, in the service of India's Foreign and Political department. Yet the Dalai Lama himself thought the Red Russians were quite harmless, so he allowed them to stay by granting a blessing audience while Bailey was still in Lhasa. The political negotiation, however, must have taken place only after the departure of the British mission. The Dalai Lama, according to the account of Bokhanov, accepted the gifts of the Soviet government (these included antique chinaware and many valuable items made of gold and silver, being undoubtedly trophies of the Bolsheviks' notorious expropriations), together with a letter from M. I. Kalinin, Chairman of TsIK, "rather favourably."¹⁴

Among those who entertained the Soviet emissaries was the Lama's powerful favourite Tsarong Shape, who gave them a tour of the new Mint and Armoury (to which he had earlier taken Bailey). Furthermore, Bokhanov was allowed to undertake a long journey around the country, during which he took about 700 photos and even shot a documentary film. The results of the political discussions which Borisov had with the Dalai Lama are unknown to us, but one can assume they were not entirely unproductive as was once suggested by the deceased Prof. N. N. Poppe.¹⁵

As early as spring 1924 a Lhasa official brought to Urga four young Tibetan boys whom the Dalai Lama sent to Russia to study artillery and manufacture of explosives. A special class for them was arranged by Narkomindel jointly with Revvoensovet USSR (Revolutionary Military Council) at the Institute of Living Oriental Languages in Leningrad. More students from Tibet were to come to Leningrad and Moscow after the completion of Borisov's mission, between 1925-1928. Two of these Tibetans (Wangchuk Dorje and Sonam-Tashi Adtse) and another one who was enrolled in 1927 (Thubten) graduated eventually from the school in 1931-32. Then, according to the Soviet explorer of Mongolia, F. K. Kozlov in the *Urga journals* of his last Tibeto-Mongolian expedition (entry for December 27 1925), a caravan laden "with things most essential for Tibet's newly established army." Proceeded from Urga to Tibet in the last days of December 1925.¹⁶ (Although these were probably the contraband arms which had been earlier detained at the Soviet-Mongol border).

There is yet another puzzling piece of evidence coming from British records – an odd telegram intercepted by the British trade office in Gyantse in late September 1925. This was addressed to "General Gingle" in Lhasa, informing him of some unspecified

“Russian goods” being sent to Tibet and requesting an amount of 6,000 lams for these to be forwarded to a person in Tientsin, named “Bakabasheff” (apparently a misspelling of the name Bakbhusev, already known to us).¹⁷ Whatever the truth was, the Soviets were prepared to sell some weapons to Lhasa, provided the Tibetan government would agree to prices fixed by the Red Army chiefs.¹⁸

Of no small value was, in addition to the above, the abundant miscellaneous information gathered by Borisov’s mission in Tibet. It confirmed, for example, the existence of three major political factions in the country: 1) the Anglophiles, represented by a small group of the thriving military, 2) the Sinophiles, also small in their numbers, consisting mainly of the monastery based elements, orienting themselves traditionally on China, and 3) the Russophiles. According to Borisov, the Tibetans *en masse* had mixed feelings towards Red Russia. Many of them still tended to identify the vast Northern Land, now ruled by the Bolsheviks, with the old and much familiar Tsarist Russia, the “country-antagonist” of England in its colonial policy. Their notion of the new Soviet Russia was then rather obscure due to the extremely conflicting information that reached them; yet they were becoming increasingly sympathetic towards it under the influence of such positive factors as the international recognition of the Soviet Union, the country’s national policy, its victory in the civil war and finally its new economic policy, the so-called “nep”. Interestingly, the civil war in Russia was perceived by them as a kind of religious conflict between the “reds” and the “whites”, similar to the controversy of their own religious sects, the “yellow hats” and the “red hats.”

The Tibetans were aware of the Soviet-Chinese treaty concluded by Karakhan in Peking in the earlier half of 1924, as well as of the Soviet activities in Outer Mongolia, although their opinion on the latter issue largely varied: some people emphasized the fact that the “reds” liberated the Mongols from Chinese oppression, whereas others blamed the “reds” for their oppression of the Mongolian monkhood. The Dalai Lama himself when talking to Borisov avoided the thorny question of the persecution of religion by the Bolsheviks. His opinion of Soviet Russia seemed to be generally favorable. He admitted that the country had regained its formerly high international status, yet was uncertain about the stability of the regime. Therefore he hesitated as to whether he should enter into official relations with the Soviet government, though agreed to deal with the Soviets on a semi-official basis, through various Soviet and Mongolian institutions. Even the head of the Anglophiles, Tsarong, “demonstrated his sincere disposition” towards Russia, having to admit that Tibet’s friendship with the British was “forced policy.” “We are theirs and yours at the same time,” he confessed once to Borisov. “Our head is with them (the British), our heart is with you (the Russians).” Tsarong, surprisingly, had some knowledge of the Bolshevik dogmas, though he himself was not in the least infected by them. (“Your government is oriented on the indigent, and my country is ruled by wealthy people like myself,” he told Borisov. “Think what will happen if your teaching penetrates into Tibet. To what results will this lead?”) To Borisov, nonetheless, he appeared as a man of a new mentality, pragmatic and sensible, proud of the innovations he personally introduced in his country.¹⁹

On the whole, Borisov’s account presented the situation in Lhasa as very unstable, mainly due to the Dalai Lama’s policy of “sitting between the two chairs,” but it could be changed to Moscow’s advantage once the positive “Russian factor” was brought back into play.

By the mid-1920s the Soviet Eastern policy had entered a new stage when relations with the Eastern countries came to be dominated by less ideological and more pragmatic considerations. On February 15, 1924, G. V. Chicherin, addressing the annual meeting of the Russian Oriental Chambers of Commerce, formulated new priorities for both Soviet Russia and Eastern nations:

the development of their own productive forces and winning back and protecting their economic independence.²⁰

One will have to remember at this point that Borisov's mission coincided chronologically with Moscow's attempts to activize its trade relations with neighbouring Afghanistan, Persia, Turkey, Outer Mongolia and Western China (Sinkiang). Tibet, though not a close neighbour, was still on the Soviet agenda. One of Borisov's assistants, Dashi Sampilon was actually a member of the managing board of the Chamber. Accordingly, the mission was assigned some purely economic tasks – "to promote penetration into Tibet of industrial and commercial capital from countries which are not infringing on Tibet's independence" and "to prevent the imperialist powers from obtaining industrial concessions in Tibet."²¹ Thus the Soviet-British political rivalry in Asia was conveniently extended by the Soviets into the economical sphere, with the ultimate goal of ousting competing British trade from Eastern markets. In carrying out this task, Borisov's mission must have tried to preliminarily reconnoiter the Tibetan market, with the help of local traders. The mission's leader, for example, is known to have carried a letter from Tepkin to two prosperous Indian merchants in Lhasa, Sodala brothers, Nila Sumdara and Butta Rodna (in Tepkin's spelling), who had some good connections at the court.

But at the same time that Moscow was trying hard to extend its influence in Lhasa through its diplomatic emissaries, Soviet prestige, though never really high there, was continuously eroded by a stream of negative information trickling into Lhasa from Urga, speaking of the excesses of the "Red rule" in Outer Mongolia and Soviet Russia. For example, a much venerated Tibetan tulku, Tagring Lama, who had returned from Buryatia in early 1924, told the Tibetans how he was mistreated by the Bolsheviks who arrested him and took away his property including donations collected for the Gomang college in the Drepung monastery. Stories like his were not new to Lhasans, but they made a particularly strong impression when told by such influential people as Buddhist saintly incarnations.

Another source of anxiety for Tibetans was the unexpected flight from Tibet of the Panchen Lama with a group of his devotees in late December 1923. The eminent Russian Buddhologist Theodor Stcherbatsky who was in Urga in the summer of 1924 gave his version of the dramatic event in his letter to a colleague in Leningrad, academician Sergei Oldenburg:

The situation in Lhasa, by the way, is this: the Dalai Lama and his associates have, much to Agwan's distress, given themselves up to militarism. But militarism requires considerable expenses such as were unknown before. So the monasteries had to be taxed and the lamas' privileges curtailed, which has given rise to protests and discontent. Those discontented were headed by the Banchen (Panchen Lama – A. A.) who sent an embassy to Lhasa led by a

courageous lama. The embassy was received rather coldly and its leader executed. As a result, the Banchen got scared and fled. He made his way unnoticed beyond Lhasa heading for Mongolia, but near Labrang he was intercepted by the Chinese, who still detain him, while showing him their greatest esteem. The Chinese want to install him in Wu-Tai-Shan, and they are assembling an anti-Dalai Lama faction around him.²²

The Panchen Lama with his entourage had finally got to Peking where he was given a warm reception by the Central government. Whether he really planned to go to Red Mongolia first, possibly to seek support of the Grand Lama of Urga, we do not know. Yet what seems most intriguing about the story of the Panchen's flight is the Soviet reaction to it. According to the already quoted letter by Stcherbatsky, Borisov met him on the way to Lhasa and "conducted some talks with him." Agwan Dorjiev, too, as soon as the sensational news reached him in Urga, rushed to meet the Panchen and he actually travelled as far as Peking looking for him, but somehow missed him. Yet before Dorjiev returned to Mongolia, he left a letter for the Panchen Lama in Peking.

The flight of the Panchen Lama naturally produced much agitation in Tibet as no one knew then his plans or destination. According to the Lhasa diary of F. M. Bailey, two subjects were uppermost in the mind of the Dalai Lama in 1924 – the departure of his fellow incarnation and Bolshevik intrigue, and it seems that he suspected some hidden connection between the two. At the same time, the Dalai Lama must have been no less embarrassed by the concurrent overtures of London and Moscow, both trying from opposite directions to win him over.

A few months after Borisov returned to Moscow, the Soviet capital was thunderstruck with more dramatic news from Lhasa – "a defeat of the Anglophile military clique" of Tsarong and "an outburst of the national liberation movement" in Tibet. What actually happened was that a number of high army officers, many of whom were educated or trained by the British, were degraded by the Dalai Lama in spring 1925 while Tsarong was away in India. Tsarong himself also fell into disgrace upon his return to Lhasa, having lost his post of Commander-in-Chief.

The reprisals resulted from a new thrust against the military by the clerical faction led by a senior monk official, the Donyer Chenno (the Dalai Lama's chief steward). The conservative clerics were obviously unhappy with the modernization of Tibet under the British guidance, which they believed caused damage to Tibet's intrinsic spiritual values, and they naturally put all the blame on Tsarong and the young army officers, the partisans of Western innovations. The military were also believed to have engaged in a plot to kill the Donyer Chenno and deprive the Dalai Lama of his temporal power leaving him only in charge of spiritual affairs.

The abortive "coup in Lhasa" drastically changed the political course hitherto followed by the Dalai Lama, making him "put the brakes" on the reforms and cool his friendliness towards the British whom he probably suspected of having had a hand in the conspiracy against him. Yet it would certainly be a gross exaggeration to describe the situation in Tibet in terms of "civil war" (as, for example, did the *Daily Telegraph* in London) or "a national liberation movement" (as did the Soviet daily *Izvestiya*). The latter carried a lengthy article on August 12 1925 entitled "The New Success of the East" which was actually based on the report in the British newspaper (unbeknown to Soviet readers).²³ Its author was none other than Chicherin himself

who commented rather emphatically on the recent developments in Tibet characterizing them as “an important step forward on the road for the liberation movement of the eastern peoples.” The anti-British “outburst” in Lhasa, in Chicherin’s opinion, was however generated not only by the anglicization of the military clique (“the new lords of the country”) which antagonized “the broad masses of the population,” but also, to some degree, by pro-Soviet feelings among the Tibetan leaders. The latter were claimed to “have said time and time again to the northern Buddhist pilgrims” (which seems to be a veiled reference to the Soviet emissaries – A.A.) that these northern countries are far closer to them than England which is gradually usurping their power and striving for ascendancy.

What seems particularly interesting about this piece by Chicherin is his assessment of Tibet’s role in the Asiatic policy of Great Britain. According to “narcom,” Tibet was something more than a “buffer” or “external glacis for the defence of English rule in India;” Tibet provided a direct link with the whole of Inner Asia and the whole of the Mongolian world. Furthermore, Tibet dominated over the ancient main route leading from China to Russia (Semirechie or the Sever River region in Russian Turkestan) and dividing the northern and southern deserts. Thus the major interior roads passing through Asia could be controlled by “whoever rules in Tibet.” By overly emphasizing the strategic significance of Tibet, Chicherin apparently lifted the veil of the Soviet ambitions in regard to that country, largely concurring with those of the “British imperialists.”

The defeat of the Anglophiles in Lhasa clearly signalled to Moscow that it should lose no time and strike while the iron was hot. S. I. Aralov, a member of the Narkomindel’s Board, wrote the following to the Politburo in December 1925.

Before England seized the most essential key position in Tibet, it is necessary to counter its aggressive policy with whatever means available; therefore we must urgently dispatch our unofficial representation to Tibet. We should expect to come across especially favorable conditions for our work there (this time), as compared to those of England and China . . .²⁴

The Soviet mission according to Aralov, was to be disguised as Mongolian embassy sent to Lhasa to discuss with the Dalai Lama some vital religious and other issues of the traditional, Mongolo-Tibetan relations which Moscow thus tried to exploit towards its own political ends. The role of Red Mongolia in the emancipation of Asiatic peoples would be neatly formulated in 1927, by M. I. Amagaev, Comintern’s representative in Ulan-Bator (Urga) who saw the country as “a bridgehead for promoting revolutionary work in the greater part of Central Asia, primarily in Tibet and Amdo, still untouched by Comintern’s revolutionary influence.”²⁵

Narkomindel’s proposal was approved by the Politburo on January 21 1926. However the mission was able to depart only late autumn of that year. It was nominally headed by a senior official of the Mongolian Foreign Ministry Gombodchin (Compo Yeshe) assisted by his secretary Amulang. Three more persons were attached to the mission from the Soviet side: Arashi, Chapchaev (Tsepag Dorji), Matsak Bimbaev; both Kalmyks, and a Buryat lama Jigme Dorji Barduev (a participant in the Borisov mission). Chapchaev, a former head of the Kalmtsik (Kalmyk Central Executive Committee), represented Narkomindel, whereas Bimbaev, a military officer, was

dispatched by the GRU, the Soviet military intelligence service. Barduev, formerly a student of the Gomang college was to serve as interpreter and also probably as a go-between with the Tibetan monasteries.

The tasks assigned to the mission included: 1) establishing a quick and regular communication channel between Lhasa and Moscow, through the agency of the Soviet consulate to be later opened in Lanchow-fu in the centre of Hansu province, and by other means; 2) spreading "correct information" on the actual situation in the Soviet Union and Mongolian People's Republic, the internal affairs and the nature of the British policy in Tibet; 3) providing support to the Russophile "national political faction" allegedly headed by the Dalai Lama; 4) preparing the ground for the conclusion of a Tibeto-Mongolian friendship treaty, similar to the one signed by Dorjiev in Urga in December 1912; 5) negotiating military aid to Tibet (provision of military instructors and artillery equipment to the Tibetan army, military training of Tibetans in the Soviet Union and MPR); 6) carrying out an economic survey of Tibet and organizing the export-import commercial operations between Tibet, Mongolia and the Soviet Union; 7) sounding out a possibility of establishing contacts with "the Buddhist movement" in India, in order to couple it with "the national liberation struggle" in Tibet.²⁶

The Gombodchin-Chapchaev mission arrived in Lhasa from Urga in late April 1927 and stayed there until the beginning of December. As previously with Borisov's mission, it became the source of many rumours and speculations for Tibetans. The British Indian authorities were immediately notified by Colonel F. M. Bailey (who still held the post of PO in Sikkim) about this new "Bolshevik mission" and they seemed very alarmed. But so were the Lhasa authorities. All movements of the Mongolian and Soviet emissaries were closely watched by Tibetan secret agents and reported to the Dalai Lama, who, according to British sources, avoided for some time any political discussions with the "Red Russian." The weapons that the Soviets brought with them, for purposes of self-defense during the journey, were taken away and kept in custody of the Tibetan government at Norbulingka. (The British were particularly suspicious about "Russian weapons" in Lhasa as there was considerable arms trafficking to Tibet from Buryatia and Outer Mongolia throughout the twenties).

Indeed, the general atmosphere in Lhasa in 1927 turned out to be surprisingly unfriendly to the Soviet visitors, contrary to Moscow's expectations. There was some clearly pronounced Russo or rather Bolshephobia in the air which began to affect Chapchaev's important work all too soon. As Colonel Bailey stated in his report of June 30 1927,

the people of Lhasa are genuinely afraid of the Bolshevism and it seems that the Dalai Lama is taking a line of action in accordance with public opinion, as represented by general talk.²⁷

The Soviets would naturally ascribe it all to hostile British propaganda, but if truth be known, they were hoist with their own petard. The Soviet basic decree on separation of Church from State as was applied to the Buddhist areas of Russia, strictly prohibited "education of the religious cult" and "ordination of persons below the age of 18." This restriction barring Buryat and Kalmyk children from monastic schools was apparently intended to undermine the entire Buddhist tradition by severing the spiritual

lineage of the lamahood. In early 1927 the First All-Union Buddhist Council in Moscow, under the pressure of the party ideologues, had to conform to the current Soviet legislation and adopt the age limit for the "khovaraks" (novices). The Dalai Lama was well aware of this new form of persecution of "Yellow creed" in Russia and he immediately raised the issue in his conversation with Chapchaev. He requested the latter to take up the matter with Chicherin suggesting that "this obstacle should be eliminated for the sake of friendship."^{28a} He further wrote a letter to that effect to Dorjiev, instructing him to convey his concern to the Soviet leaders. Accordingly, Chapchaev would declare to the OGPU (The Joint State Political Administration, a predecessor of the KGB) upon his return to Moscow:

In order to establish good relations with Tibet, we will have to lift or somehow modify the restriction concerning the age limit for the khovaraks, which is the only solution to the problem. But this, of course, if we want to proceed from the higher interests of our international politics and not from those of our domestic situation. Without this, there is no point even in looking in the direction of the Buddhist East especially Tibet. The more so that the Dalai Lama told me that "the Chinese and the English acknowledged his authority in religious matters over (their) Buddhists, whereas Russia, though it is considered to be much closer to Tibet, has not yet done so in regard to her own Buddhists."^{28b}

The Soviet-Tibetan rapprochement was clearly coming to a head with the 1927 Mongolian mission to Lhasa. The news from Buryatia of a trial of 88 secessionist lamas from the Tsugol and Aga datsans in June of that year had some strong repercussions in the ruling circles of Lhasa, giving rise to openly anti-Bolshevik sentiments. (Norbu Dhondup, personal assistant to the PO in Sikkim, obtained newspaper cuttings from Verkhneudinsk reporting the event. He showed these to the Dalai Lama, the Shapas and other high officials and this created a bad impression among them about the Bolsheviks).²⁹ One result of this hostile attitude was that the Dalai Lama declined Gombodchin's proposal to establish a Mongolian representation in Lhasa, perhaps fearing that this could provide a cover for Bolshevik propaganda activities. Yet Chapchaev, acting from his side, succeeded somehow in securing the Lama's consent to set up a line of government post stations (urtons) between Yumbeise and Lhasa to facilitate communication between Russia and Tibet.

Furthermore, in a letter that the Lama sent to Dorjiev with the mission, he expressed his readiness to conclude an agreement with the Soviets for the supply of arms and gun-powder to Tibet. Therefore the Mongolian mission should not be seen as a complete fiasco, especially if we consider some of its other activities in Tibet. Bimbaev, for example, gathered much valuable intelligence for the GRU which the latter used subsequently for a report giving a comprehensive analysis of the condition of the Tibetan army as well as the potential of Tibet becoming a theatre of war.³⁰ Much of this information was based on his personal observations recorded as he watched the regular drills of troops in Lhasa. Bimbaev also witnessed the experimental firing from 10 domestically manufactured mortars which was held in public and was followed by a municipal festival to celebrate the event. However, Bimbaev failed to visit any of the 3 armouries, all in the vicinity of Lhasa. (The report mentioned above tells how he

once tried to sneak into the new Arsenal at Dote, to see its new European equipment, but was caught by the guards and had to escape). In addition, the Kalmyks (both Chapchaev and Bimbaev) took several hundred photographs in Tibet, which recalls similar work done by Bokhanov in 1924.

The eight months spent by the mission in Tibet were certainly not in vain as its members succeeded in making useful contacts with persons in the various strata of the Tibetan society, something to which Moscow undoubtedly attached great importance. The Soviet envoys visited many of the country's major monasteries, including the Panchen Lama's abandoned residence of Tashi-lhunpo. While in Lhasa they were often entertained by a circle of Soviet sympathizers in the house of one Tibetan photographer, as Bimbaev disclosed in an interview with the author. The Tibetans asked them many questions about Soviet Russia and seemed to be keenly interested in the Socialist reconstruction of the country.

The most intriguing part of the story of this mission which may explain to some extent the failure of Gombodchin's diplomatic endeavours comes from British sources. It was received by Bailey firsthand from Kusho Khenchung, the Tibetan trade agent in Gyantse, who served as interpreter during the Dalai Lama's interview with the Bolsheviks. According to Khenchung, Dorjiev sent two letters to the Dalai Lama, an official one delivered by Chapchaev, in which he wrote that "Mongolian government was very good" and that he should do "as this mission requested," and another, more confidential one, through one Tibetan trader. The last letter was in a rather different vein:

I am an old man and will die very soon. Mongolia is not a peaceful country, as it was formerly. The government is deadly against religion and monks and they are helpless. Please do not have anything to do with the mission. I had to write a letter at their dictation to Your Holiness for these Bolshevik agents to take with them but please do not take any notice of that letter.³¹

At heart Dorjiev had long been unhappy with the sinister role assigned to him by Narkomindel, having to write optimistic letters to the Dalai Lama to assure him that Buddhism was flourishing under the Bolsheviks in Russia. Yet he had to continue, being convinced that he was doing the job for the lofty sake of Russo-Tibetan friendship, which he believed was his life's mission. He also hoped that his services rendered to the Soviet government would make the Communist authorities more tolerant if not protective towards Russian Buddhists. However, Dorjiev was to be fully disillusioned in his expectations in the long run.

Our account of the 1927 Mongolian mission would be incomplete if we did not mention its mysterious counterpart, the expedition of the Russian artist and mystic, Nicholas Roerich. There was obviously some connection between both; it will suffice to say that the two expeditions were mounted at the same time (the autumn of 1926) and location (Ulan-Bator). According to B. I. Pankratov (then serving in the Soviet Embassy in Peking), Roerich wanted to enter Lhasa triumphantly as the 25th king of the legendary Shambhala, Peldan Rigden who, as was commonly believed, would come from the North, at the head of his Shambala troops, to bring salvation to mankind.^{32a} In Lhasa Roerich intended to meet with the Dalai Lama, for whom he was carrying a letter and a painted image of the Victorious Lord, Maitreya, and also to make large donations to the three great monasteries of Lhasa (Sera, Ganden and

Drepung). The important thing, however, is that the 25th Shambala king was traditionally identified as a Panchen Lama. The fact that Roerich, some time prior to his expedition, made contacts with both the Soviet leaders (Chicherin and one of the OGPU chiefs Trilisser) and the exiled Panchen Lama, provides a wide scope for speculation. Was the unusual expedition possibly designed by Moscow to reconcile the two highest incarnations of Tibet? Or was it rather to deepen the rift between them, and by exploiting the Dalai-Panchen Lamas' antagonism, to precipitate a "lamaist revolution" (the Shambala war) in Tibet? The latter assumption seems quite plausible: shortly before N. Roerich and his party secretly left Urumchi for Moscow, in May 1926, they revealed to the Soviet consul there, A. E. Bystrov, that they were "acting on the instruction of the mahatmas." These included *inter alia* going to the Soviet Union and thence to Mongolia where they were to make contact with the Panchen Lama living in China to urge him to join them in Urga on a spiritual procession bound for Tibet to liberate the country from the English. The ultimate purpose of the mysterious Himalayan mahatmas, in Roerich's words, was allegedly "to merge the Buddhist and Communist teaching with a view to creating a great union of Eastern Republics."^{32b}

According to a recent investigation by Moscow journalist and scholar Oleg Shishkin, N. Roerich's Tibetan expedition was part of a well-designed, large-scale operation by the Soviet secret services, such as GRU and OGPU, which, if successful, was to change drastically the political status-quo in Central Asia. Moscow's master plan envisaged the bringing of the military to Tibet (possibly a Mongolian force) and the liquidation of the Dalai Lama! But this apparently made the Narkomindel diplomatic initiatives vis-a-vis Tibet completely unnecessary.

In the books and essays N. Roerich later published about his journey, he spoke very critically of the Dalai Lama by openly opposing him to the Panchen Lama – the former he claimed was responsible for the decline of the Buddhist doctrine in the country, whereas the latter was to restore it in its purity upon his return to Tibet. Still, the Panchen Lama's return to Tibet with a host of his followers in the tense atmosphere of those days would hardly have been a peaceful homecoming. Interestingly, the Soviet sympathizers in Lhasa, according to Bimbaev, were all Panchen supporters, but so were many of the monks in Lhasa, especially in Drepung, who were then pressing the Dalai Lama to allow them to bring the Panchen Lama back to Tibet where his absence was deeply felt by the people. As to the Panchen Lama himself, he was eager to come back as soon as possible and he seemed even to have made some preparations for his return journey in early spring 1927.

The Roerich expedition, however, ended up in a disaster when the Tibetan authorities prohibited the "Red Russians" from entering Lhasa (actually on Bailey's advice), having detained them for nearly five months outside Nagchu, in the arctic weather of the Tibetan plateau.

Moscow kept a close eye on the Panchen Lama during the entire period of his exile in China, especially after he settled near Mukden in Manchuria in 1927, suspicious that both Great Britain and Japan were trying to enlist him in their schemes. And, indeed, his name and numerous "lundreds" (prophecies) were widely used as anti-Soviet propaganda by those elements who rallied around him, yet there was no evidence of his personal involvement in their subversive activities. This led the OGPU to believe that the Panchen Lama was actually leaning towards Soviet Russia, secretly from his entourage. Nonetheless he would soon turn into an ominous figure for the

Soviets in the rapidly deteriorating international situation of the late 20s when Stalin began to talk loudly about the “growth of interventionist tendencies in the imperialist camp” and the “war menace.” The Panchen’s intense liaising with the “counter-revolutionary” clergy in Outer Mongolia and Buryatia suggested that the pro-Japanese “Mukden clique,” with which the Soviets associated him, was plotting the overthrow of “people’s rule” there. The OGPU’s own scheme regarding the Panchen Lama conceived in mid-1928 envisaged inviting him to Outer Mongolia, through some influential *gegen* there, and thence to bring him to Leningrad!

The Soviet intricate Tibetan scheme at this stage envisaged sending a Buddhist mission to Lhasa (the initiative came from the Anti-religious section of the Central Committee of the Bolshevik Communist Party which passed a resolution to that effect on February 28 1928). It was to consist of reliable “progressive” Buryat and Kalmyk monks and laymen, some of whom were OGPU informants. The split of the lamaist clergy in the USSR since 1922 into the reformists (“obnovlentsy”), adherents to the reform movement launched by Dorjiev and Tepkin, and “conservatives,” their opponents, created an additional problem for Moscow. Both established their channels of communication with Lhasa, however, whereas the reformists supplied Tibet with positive information about Soviet Russia, the conservative lamas maliciously “spread slanders” complaining to the Dalai Lama of the persecution of Buddhism by Bolsheviks. Hence the main task of the delegation was to promote a closer link between the reform movement and the “Lhasan religious centre,” with a view to reinforce the reformists by the Dalai Lama’s superior authority. This was of paramount importance as the Soviets hoped to bring about the schism of Tibetan monkhood, at some point in the future, with the help of their reformists, something which they also tried to do, and not without success, in Outer Mongolia. At the same time, the mission, according to the OGPU designs, was seen as a counter-balance to the adverse influence of the Buddhist centre at Mukden headed by the Dalai Lama’s “old time antagonist,” the Panchen Lama.

The secret dealings of Moscow with Lhasa were to be continued with utmost cautiousness at this point. The British, having lost their footing in Tibet, began “courting studiously” the Panchen Lama, so asserted the OGPU analysts, scheming to annex Tibet with his help (in which case they were secretly intriguing against their old friend, the Dalai Lama). Thus the “growing sympathy of Tibet towards Soviet Russia” might rouse British aggressiveness to the point that the British might even decide to go ahead with their annexation scheme without further delay, was the conclusion the OGPU made.³³

The Buddhist mission was to depart from Ulan-Baator in October 1928, carrying appeals to the Dalai Lama from Buryat and Kalmyk Buddhist councils to be summoned earlier that year. However, for some reason the departure of the delegation was delayed and then postponed to the spring of 1929 when caravans started to operate between Ulan-Baator and Lhasa. It was scrapped ultimately as the Soviets realized that they were unlikely to gain anything from this new contact with Lhasa.

There is an extremely interesting memorandum *On the Tibetan Question* submitted to the Politburo by P. M. Nikiforov, the former Soviet ambassador to Mongolia, dated September 22 1929. This must have been an attempt, actually the very last one, to activize the seemingly “passive” Tibetan scheme before the Soviet leaders finally gave up on Tibet. The focus of Nikiforov’s memo was on two key areas in Central

Asia – Kansu province of China and Tibet which, in his opinion, should be given a high priority by the Soviet government.

At present Kansu is open to our commercial and political initiatives which though illegal at the moment, will become semi-legal and legal in the future. – Having gained a footing in Kansu, we can relatively easily spread regular influence from there to Tibet as well, towards its raw material markets where we must establish ourselves economically, by all means possible. – Tibet, which should be given our most earnest attention, is . . . a point where our enemies are most unlikely to show us any considerable resistance.

Nikiforov would further define the existent economic spheres of influence in Tibet:

British influence, through its colonial traders (those from Sikkim and Kashgar – A.A.) is exercised exclusively in the southern part of Tibet, in Tsang province, where the capital city of the country, Lhasa, is situated. In the northern and eastern areas, bordering on China, there is no British influence whatsoever; these areas are entirely under the influence of the Chinese capital.³⁴

Thus it was here that the Soviet Union, unchecked by the competing British power, should establish its economical and political supremacy, so Nikiforov's memo implied. "I believe it is high time for us to abandon our policy of maintaining a 'balance of power' in Tibet, and proceed to a more active policy, the more so that the balance had already been upset by England a long time ago." The goal of that policy, apart from forging a link with China (via Kansu province), should be "to secure such a position in Central Asia, from which we could easily monitor the colonial activity of England, and from which we could penetrate, with the help of our Buryat lamas, into the English territories adjoining Tibet."³⁵

The British, in the meantime, were not sitting idly waiting for the Bolsheviks to begin consolidating their position in Tibet. In 1929 steps were taken by them to improve their lame relations with Lhasa by sending there another mission of the PO in Sikkim (this time J. L. R. Weir). Although his visit was postponed at the request of the Tibetan government, the British had succeeded by the beginning of the 1930s in restoring their somewhat shattered prestige. As Weir would report to the British Indian authorities on May 25 1930:

The pendulum would appear to be swinging again in our favour. The recent visit of M. Laden La to Lhasa in connection with the Nepal-Tibet dispute has helped to break down the feeling of aloofness. Tibetan senior officials expect my visit to Lhasa this summer. Opportunity should be taken of this changed attitude to restore and consolidate their former feelings of friendship towards us.³⁶

There can be several reasons why Moscow abandoned its Tibetan ambitions in or some time after 1929. One of these must be the religious persecutions which began in the USSR in 1930, with the onset of mass collectivisation. The arrest of leading Buddhists in the country, some of whom, like Tepkin, were personally known to the Dalai Lama, certainly made further Moscow-Lhasa dialogue impossible. The Dalai

Lama was embittered and began to speak openly against the Bolsheviks. In his political testament he would name “red ideology” among the five forms of degeneration rampant in the present era. Moscow apparently could neither rely on him, who was now making overtures to the reactionary government of Chang Kai-shek, while also remaining on friendly terms with the British nor on his exiled antagonist, the Panchen Lama, who was finally revealed by the OGPU to be a “Japanese puppet” and definitely anti-Soviet. Besides, the OGPU must have also detected that their chief mediator with Lhasa, Dorjiev, was “playing a double hand,” trying to liaise with Lhasa on his own, independent of their control. And indeed the aged Khambo lama attempted several times from 1928 onwards to get in touch with Lhasa by sending his own messengers there. He naively believed that the Dalai Lama’s intercession for his Buddhist co-religionists in Russia could stop the reprisals. In May 1931, for example, Dorjiev together with Tepkin paid a visit to Narkomindel to discuss plans for sending “our courier” to Lhasa. The officials there seemed to be interested, yet this new initiative of his, like all earlier ones, came to nothing. And shortly after the OGPU arrested the person whom Dorjiev recommended for the job, Sherap Tepkin.

Another important reason which should not be overlooked is that the key man behind the Tibetan scheme, Chicherin, resigned from his office in mid-1930. Actually he had stopped taking any share in decision making long before that (since the autumn of 1928 the Soviet “narcom” was away from the country undergoing medical treatment in Germany). His functions in the interim were taken over by his deputy and long time rival M. M. Litvinov (who would officially succeed him in 1930). Chicherin’s diplomacy by that time was clearly at odds with the new orientation of Soviet foreign policy under Stalin. The narcom especially resented attempts by Comintern and the OGPU to interfere with his word. On the other hand, his extreme discreetness and undercover ways of dealing with the Tibetan issue call to mind the same wary approach to the latter by Tsarist diplomats.

There was perhaps one more reason which took the wind out of Narkomindel’s sails in Tibet – the failure of the revolution in China and the ensuing triumph of the reactionary right-wing Kuomintang. This made Moscow rather pessimistic with regard to a much anticipated Sino-Tibetan settlement by means of “a people’s revolution.” But, all told, it was mainly Stalin’s crack-down on religion that finally estranged the two countries. Nikiforov’s unrealized project is in fact the last document in the Politburo’s secret file on Tibet relating to the period (1920s).

Dorjiev’s personal liaisons with Lhasa were also cut short long before the Dalai Lama’s death in 1933. By order of Narkomindel (obviously instigated by the OGPU, annoyed by his “anti-Soviet agitation”) he was to retreat in 1931 to the Buddhist temple in Leningrad, the seat of his unofficial Tibeto-Mongolian legation. A year later a small group of Buryat and Kalmyk monks was arrested for the illegal crossing of the Soviet-Mongolian border. These were Dorjiev’s confidants dispatched with the latest news from the communist “Pure Land” to Lhasa.

Notes

- 1a *The Trotsky Papers, 1917-1922*, Mouton, The Hague-Paris, Vol. 1, 1971, pp. 620, 673 (Trotsky’s letters to the Central Committee, Russian Communist Party, dated 5 August and 20 September 1919).

- 1b RTsKhIDNI, (The Russian Centre for the Preservation and Usage of Documents of Recent History) f. 2, op. 2, d. 183, l. 1–4.
- 2 “Zhizn’ Natsionalnoitei,” 26 May 1919 (the English quotation is extracted from *Soviet Russia and the East, 1920–1927*, a documentary survey by X. L. Eudin and R. C. North, Stanford, 1957, p. 199).
- 3 *The Trotsky Papers, op. cit.*, Vol. 2, p. 209 (telegram to Narkomindel and Chicherin dated 4 June 1920).
- 4 On Dorjiev see: J. Snelling, *Buddhism in Russia, The Story of Agvan Dorzhiev, Lhasa’s Emissary to the Tsar*, Shaftesbury, Dorset, 1993, also A. I. Andreyev, *The Buddhist Shrine of Petrograd – Buddijskaya svyatynya Petrograda*, Ulan-Ude, 1992.
- 5 The National Archive of Buryatia, f. 643, op. 1, d. 2, l. 2 (Dorjiev’s memo to Narkomindel, July 1921, undated copy).
- 6 For V. Khomutnikov’s biography see V. Sh. Bembeev, *Chelovek iz Legendy (The Man from a Legend)*, Moscow-Elista, 1991.
- 7 The account of Khomutnikov’s mission is based on the published biography of Khomutnikov (see note 6) which includes the report submitted by the mission’s leader to Narkomindel on 28 October 1922.
- 8 V. Sh Bembeev, *op. cit.*, (note 6), p. 85.
- 9 Charles Bell, *Portrait of a Dalai Lama*, London, 1987, p. 312.
- 10 Letter from Chicherin to Stalin, secretary of the Politburo, dated 4 August 1923, Archive of the President of the Russian Federation (referred to hereafter as APRF), f. 3, op. 65, d. 739, l. 18.
- 11 Letter from Chicherin to Stalin, dated 18 August 1923, APRF, *ibid.*, l. 30.
- 12 See note 10.
- 13 *Izvestiya* (Moscow), 20 May 1924.
- 14 The account of the second Soviet mission to Tibet is largely based on two sources – the reminiscences of one of its participants, F. V. Bokhanov, though they make no mention of the political discussions between Borisov and the Dalai Lama (manuscript entitled *Breaking Through the Imperialist Blockade*, in the possession of Prof. Yu. O. Oglaev from Elista University, Kalmykia) and the transcript of a lecture on modern Tibet delivered by Batorsky (S. S. Borisov) at the Stalin Communist University on 26 May 1927; RTsKhIDNI, Moscow, f. 532, op. 4, d. 343).
- 15 See N. N. Poppe, “Buddhism in the USSR,” *Religion in the USSR*, Series 1, nr. 59, Munich, 1960, p. 176.
- 16 Archive of the Russian Geographical Society, f. 18, op. 1 d. 161, l. 800 ob.
- 17 IOR, L/P&S/10/1088, p. 293 (confidential letter from PO in Sikkim to Foreign Secretary to the Government of India, dated 21 September 1925).
- 18 This was suggested by Chicherin in his memo to Stalin of 4 August 1923, concerning the second Soviet expedition to Tibet, APRF, f. 3, op. 65, d. 739, l. 19 (item 6).
- 19 RTsKhIDNI, f. 532, op. 4, d. 343, l. 44.
- 20 See *Dokumenty Vneshnei Politiki SSSR (Documents concerning the Foreign Policy of the USSR)*, Vol. VII, Moscow 1963, pp. 114–115. The Russo-Oriental Chamber of Commerce was set up in Moscow in late 1922, under the auspices of the Council of Labour and Defense, a Sovnarkom sub-structure. Its main objective was to promote trade relations between Soviet Russia and Eastern countries.
- 21 APRF, f. 3, op. 65, d. 739, l. 20 (items 8 and 9).
- 22 Archive of the Russian Academy, St. Petersburg, f. 208, op. 3, d. 685, l. 118 (undated letter from Th. Stcherbatsky to S. Oldenburg). Stcherbatsky probably recounted in his letter a version of the Panchen Lama’s flight from Tibet he had heard from Dorjiev in Urga in 1924.
- 23 Chicherin referred to his source of information as “a recent communication from London.” This seems to have been a column in the *Daily Telegraph* of 31 July 1925, under the headline of “Civil War in Tibet. Modernism v. Lamaism.”
- 24 Letter from S. Aralov to the Politburo, dated 18 December 1925, APRF *op. cit.*, l. 64.
- 25 Extracted from his speech delivered to the Eastern section of Comintern’s Executive Committee on 14 December 1927, RTsEhIDNI, f. 495, op. 1.54, d. 283, l. 160.

- 26 See note 24, *op. cit.*, l. 62–63.
- 27 IOR, L/P&S/11/277 (Report of F. M. Bailey to the Foreign Secretary to the Government of India, dated 30 June 1927).
- 28a Transcript of A. Chapchaev's interview with the deputy chief of the Eastern section, OGPU, Petrosian, dated 23 July 1928, RTsKhIDNI, f. 89, op. 4, d. 162, l. 142.
- 28b *Ibid.*, l. 143.
- 29 IOR, Mss Eur. f. 157/240, letter from Norbu Dhondup to F. M. Bailey, dated 2 September 1927. The newspaper cuttings referred to were most likely from *Buryat-Mongol Unen*, issues for June 10 and July 23, 1927.
- 30 The State Historical Archive, Elista, Kalmykia, R-137, op. 1, d. 2, ll. 153–164 (typewritten copy of the report entitled *Voennoe Delo v Tibete – Organisation of the armed forces in Tibet*, drawn presumably in early 1928).
- 31 IOR, L/P&S/11/277, dispatch from PO, Sikkim, F. M. Bailey to the Foreign Secretary to the Government of India, dated 26 September 1927.
- 32a Yu. L. Krol', "Boris Ivanovich Pankratov – zarisovka k portretu uchite lya, (B. I. Pankratov, A Sketch for Teacher's Portrait)," in *Strany i Narody Vostoka*, Vol. XXVI, Moscow, 1989, p. 90.
- 32b APRF, 0304, op. 1, d. 30, l. 76; Bystrov's diary, entry for April 19, 1926.
- 33 RTsKhIDNI, f. 89, op. 4, d. 162, l. 60 (Report by the OGPU *On the Buddhist Areas*, undated, signed by Petrosian, deputy chief of the OGPU's Eastern section).
- 34 APRF, *op. cit.*, l. 90 (Memorandum *On the Tibetan Question*, submitted to the Politburo by N. M. Nikiforov, dated 22 September 1929).
- 35 *Ibid.*, l. 91.
- 36 IOR, L/P&S/10/1088, *Tibet: International Affairs*. This a rather lengthy report by J.L.R. Weir submitted to the Foreign Secretary to the Government of India, dated 25 May 1930. The particular quotation comes from the section "Tibet and India" (p. 81).

MONGOLIA, TIBET, AND BUDDHISM OR, A TALE OF TWO ROERICHS

Robert A. Rupen

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Introduction

Lamaist Buddhism formed the foundation of a Tibet-Mongolia connection which was significant for nearly 400 years.¹ Directly stemming from the religious link was considerable influence of the Tibetan language in Mongolia, as well as ties via pilgrimages, trade-caravans, and the presence of Mongolian novices studying in Lhasa and Tibetan representatives in Urga. The symbolic importance of the Dalai Lama as an element common to Tibetans and Mongols was clearly demonstrated in 1904–5 when the Dalai Lama fled Lhasa and tens of thousands of Mongols from all over flocked to him at Urga to gain spiritual credit. The Tibet-Mongolia connection was authentic and important.

But Communist restrictions and the destruction of Lamaism in both Tibet and Mongolia dissolved the religious cement that united the two lands. The language and the communications links were also systematically broken, so that almost nothing remains to unite Mongolia and Tibet: each goes its separate and for the most part unrelated way. The essential blows of destruction of the common Lamaist religion were delivered in the late 1930s in Mongolia by order of Moscow and in the late 1960s in Tibet by order of Peking. The Sino-Soviet dispute confirms and deepens the separation of Mongolia from Tibet.

Nicholas Roerich (1874–1947) and his son George (1902–1960) were important participant-observers in the development of the relations of Mongolia and Tibet in the Twentieth Century. They both studied the Lamaist-Buddhist religion which undergirded Mongolian-Tibetan relations. and Nicholas, especially, subscribed to many of the religion's tenets and contributed to its modernizing adaptations. The careers of the Russian-born father and son were closely involved with the Buddhism-Mongolia-Tibet connection from 1924 when they began their important Central Asian Expedition, until 1960 when George died in Moscow. Their contribution to and participation in these matters continued long-standing Russian academic and political tradition, and some impact of their work survived their deaths. Evidence of continuing influence includes one unusual item: the presence on the United States one-dollar bill of the reverse side of the Great Seal, which appears there as a direct result of Nicholas Roerich's bizarre relationship with then-Secretary of Agriculture Henry Wallace in

1934. The occult and the mystical attributes of Buddhism, and the appeal of arcane and mysterious symbols, were conveyed to Wallace by Nicholas Roerich and they encouraged the American's already-strong interest in the Second Coming of Christ, which is symbolically suggested by the Great Seal.

There also survives in New York City a Roerich Museum which is a small-scale heir to a much larger museum (now defunct) built by the Roerich Society in 1929. Much of the published work of both Roerichs appeared in English, and George Roerich's record of the 1924-1928 Central Asian Expedition, *Trails to Inmost Asia*, continues to be of unique value. Interest in the paintings of Nicholas Roerich still exists in America.

George Roerich's return to Russia in 1957 rejuvenated the scholarship in Tibetan and Sanskrit studies that had once been a pride of Russian intellectual endeavor, and the return of 400 paintings of Nicholas Roerich's at the same time helped to re-establish his artistic reputation in Russia. Soviet books and articles about the Roerichs continue to appear, and George's surviving brother, Svyatoslav, received an award in Moscow in 1978.

The Roerichs spent many years in India, and their writings and activities are widely known there. Nehru credited Nicholas Roerich with having appreciably enriched Indians' knowledge of their own ancient culture, and Nicholas Roerich's paintings are highly valued in India.

The Roerichs functioned in a historical context involving several cross-cutting traditions. They were intimately involved in Russia's complex place in East-West, Asia-Europe, relations; in the Russian academic tradition; in the religion-science and religion-Communism conflicts; in Russian nationalism, imperialism, and expansionism; in Russian-Chinese relations as well as Russian-British, Russian-Indian, and Russian-American relations. They were thoroughly enmeshed in Mongolia-Tibet-Buddhism- Russia-China-Indian interactions; they were part of, and to some extent they affected, the complex interplay.

Roerich-related events occurred at three especially important and politically sensitive times: 1926-7, 1934-5, and 1957. Chinese-Russian relations were affected by Chang Tso-lin's defeat of Feng Yu-hsiang in 1925-6 and the Chinese Communist Party-Kuomintang split in 1927. The Roerichs were in Moscow in 1926, in Ulan Bator 1926-7, and in Tibet 1927-8. Their Central Asian Expedition represented the last time anyone negotiated a Sinkiang-Siberia-Mongolia-Tibet-India journey and dealt with Central Asia as a connected unit.

A serious Japanese threat to the USSR was developing in 1934-5 when the Roerichs were on the scene, where they persistently probed the borders of Manchuria and Mongolia. Russia and Japan each suspected them of spying for the other. Accusing the Roerichs of espionage was a common occurrence, but there was never agreement on who it was they were spying for Igor Stravinsky, who worked with Roerich in 1910-12 on the famous *Rite of Spring*, later said, "I was not surprised to hear of his secret activities and of his curious connection with Vice President Wallace. . . . He looked as though he ought to have been either a mystic or a spy."²

The Nicholas Roerich - Henry Wallace connection in 1931-5 developed from their shared interest in the mystical, occult, and supernatural. An important part of the attraction of Buddhism-Mongolia-Tibet to Nicholas Roerich was this dimension. Symbols providing clues to the future Utopian "Shambhala" (Roerich) and the Second

Coming (Henry Wallace) were perhaps to be found in remote Central Asia. As U.S. Secretary of Agriculture, Henry Wallace in 1934 inspired and supported a USDA expedition to Manchuria and Mongolia, nominally “to find drought-resistant grasses,” but actually to search for signs of the Second Coming and Nicholas Roerich was named leader of that expedition.

Even though Henry Wallace turned against Nicholas Roerich and broke all contact with him in September 1935, the Democratic Party Presidential Conventions of 1940 and 1944 were occasions for rumors and threats of exposure concerning Nicholas Roerich-Henry Wallace correspondence: the so-called “guru letters.” Insofar as Henry Wallace’s reputation for mysticism led to substituting Harry Truman for Henry Wallace as Vice Presidential candidate to run with FDR in 1944, the connection with Nicholas Roerich may even have influenced the course of the Cold War.³

Encouragement by Nicholas Roerich of Henry Wallace’s proclivities toward mysticism led to the change in design of U.S. currency. Henry Wallace pushed for and obtained inclusion of the reverse side of the Great Seal on the one-dollar bill; a change introduced in 1935 and still in use today. The reverse side of the Great Seal is replete with mystical symbolism.⁴

George Roerich returned to the USSR permanently in 1957, a time when Sino-Soviet relations were especially delicate, and beginning their slide to an open break. His return heralded new attention to Tibetan and Buddhist studies in the USSR, and such scholarship reverberated with political overtones. A Mongolia-Tibet relationship might have developed as part of overall Sino-Soviet collaboration, but the Sino-Soviet split in fact confirmed separation of Mongolia from Tibet. The cement of Buddhism which formed the foundation of Mongolian-Tibetan unity was dissolved, and the connection disintegrated.

Historical context

Tibetan lamas propagated their faith in Outer Mongolia in the 16th Century, establishing the first Buddhist monastery there at Erdeni Dzu in 1586.⁵ The Mongolian religious leader, the Eighth Jebtsun Damba Khutukhtu, who died in 1924, was born in Tibet in 1870 and brought to Urga by a Khalkha Mongolian delegation in 1875. Many Buryat Mongols – about a thousand a year in the 1880s and 1890s according to Pozdneev – and a handful of Kalmyk Mongols made pilgrimages to Urga and some of them studied religion there. Buryat Mongolian Buddhist leaders – the so-called Khambo Lama and also the “Shiretu” of Gusinoe datsan (monastery) were “confirmed” in Urga by the Jebtsun Damba Khutukhtu.

Some Buryat and Kalmyk Mongols even made pilgrimages to Lhasa, and a few of them studied there. An outstanding example of such a Buryat Mongol was Agvan Dorjeev (1853–1938), who by the year 1900 had become one of the chief advisers and tutors to the Thirteenth Dalai Lama (1876–1933). Dorjeev not only maintained ties with Buryat and Kalmyk Mongols in Russia, strengthening the religious connection to Tibet, but he also maintained ties with the Tsarist Government and developed a political association of Tibet with Russia.

1901 was a turning point. Russian explorers – Prejevalsky, Pozdneev, and Kozlov – had all failed to reach Lhasa because they were blocked by the unreceptive government there. Prejevalsky especially had expressed ambitious political plans:

Prejevalsky was the first Russian to voice the idea of fomenting a rebellion of Buddhists as well as Moslems and of uniting the Buddhist Tibetans and Khalkha Mongols with the Buddhist Buryats as well as the Moslem Uighurs with the Moslem Uzbeks and Kirgiz – under Russian sovereignty. He began to look at Mongolia and China from the point of view of a military strategist. . . . His dream of seeing Lhasa and the Dalai Lama . . . was now not just a personal, but a national dream.

In 1878 he sent a memorandum to the Geographic Society and the War Ministry. . . . He drew a picture of Lhasa as the Rome of Asia with spiritual power stretching from Ceylon to Japan over 250 million people: the most important target for Russian diplomacy. . . . The political goal, the spread of Russian influence to Tibet and the Himalayas, encircling China and threatening India. . . . Scientific explorations [would] mask the political aims of the expeditions. . . .⁶

But when Pozdneev attempted to establish teaching of the Tibetan language at Vladivostok in October 1900, the Ministry of Education turned down the request for authorization, and Count Witte indicated at that time that such a move would not fit in with Russian policy: “Opening of Tibet to the world . . . would hardly be in our interest . . . [and] we have no indication that we can count on the possibility of realizing such assumptions in the near future.”⁷ However, after Agvan Dorjeev led an official delegation of Tibetans to St. Petersburg in 1901, and carried with him specific written endorsement of the “pro-Russian” move by the Dalai Lama himself, a Buryat Mongol named Tsybikov began to teach Tibetan at Vladivostok (in 1902).⁸

The British were extremely concerned about the apparent Russian advantage in Lhasa, and began to consider countermeasures. Obviously the British saw the Agvan Dorjeev-Tibetan delegation to St. Petersburg as another indication of continuing Russian expansionism and a potential threat to their position in India. Their response to the Russian challenge was the Younghusband Expedition, which occupied Lhasa August 1904–April 1905.⁹

Agvan Dorjeev convinced the Dalai Lama to leave Lhasa before the British arrived, and to flee to Urga. He arrived there in November 1904. While in some ways it was a triumphal tour – tens of thousands of Buddhists converged on Urga from all over Central Asia – two negative developments took place. The Jebtsun Damba Khutukhtu did not welcome the presence of the Dalai Lama, whom he looked on as a rival spiritually and politically, and he definitely did not encourage the Dalai Lama to remain. More importantly, the hoped-for Russian assistance (undoubtedly firmly promised by Agvan Dorjeev) was not forthcoming. The Dalai Lama had invited Kozlov, Shcherbatskoi, and Baradin¹⁰ to return with him to Lhasa, and plans had also been made for a Buryat “honor guard” to accompany the Dalai Lama back home. But the British Government protested and the Russians withdrew financial support for the Lhasa trip for the scholars and cancelled the Buryat guards.

Whether the British protest alone would have caused Russian retreat cannot be known with certainty, since by the time of the policy-shift Japan had defeated the Russians, causing them to lose their taste for expansion in Asia, at least for awhile. However, in the words of the British-Russian Convention of 1907 (Article 11), “it is

clearly understood that Buddhists . . . subjects of Great Britain or of Russia, may enter into direct relations on strictly religious matters with the Dalai Lama and the other representatives of Buddhism in Tibet.”

The Dalai Lama left Urga before the end of 1905 and appears to have spent the years 1906 and 1907 in Kansu Province (Koko-Nor) and Inner Mongolia. The British had invaded his country, the Russians seemed to have abandoned him, and he did not want to turn to China. But finally in 1908 he did go to Peking. The Chinese of course interpreted this as capitulation and an acceptance of unrestricted Chinese sovereignty. In December 1908 the Dalai Lama left Peking for Lhasa, and the Manchu Government sent a harsh taskmaster as its representative there. The Manchus sent a similar tough representative to Urga in 1908.¹¹ In both cases the ruthless and arrogant behavior of Peking’s viceroys caused native unrest building up to open rebellion. The Dalai Lama fled to Darjeeling (India) in 1910 and pleaded with Sir Charles Bell for British assistance to save Tibet from Chinese oppression, and in 1911 the Jebtsun Damba Khutukhtu sent a delegation to St. Petersburg to plead for Russian assistance to save Mongolia from Chinese oppression.

The overthrow of the Manchus in October 1911 simplified matters for Russia in Mongolia and Great Britain in Tibet. In their separate tripartite conferences at Kyakhta and Simla [Russia-Mongolia-China at Kyakhta; Great Britain (India)-Tibet-China at Simla], similar arrangements were worked out. In both Mongolia and Tibet, China would be “suzerain” – a somewhat vague condition with a clear indication, however, that it meant something well short of “sovereign.” Both Mongolia and Tibet would be split into “Outer” and Inner,” with China being “sovereign” in Inner Mongolia and Inner Tibet, and “suzerain” in Outer Mongolia and Outer Tibet. Russia would control foreign affairs in Outer Mongolia and Great Britain would control foreign affairs in Outer Tibet. The Jebtsun Damba Khutukhtu in Mongolia and the Dalai Lama in Tibet would control “Autonomous Governments” and be protected against blatant Chinese interference and permanent Chinese settlement. Mongolian and Tibetan religious communication would continue.

A slight flurry accompanied an unexpected announcement that Agvan Dorjeev had concluded a Tibet-Mongolia Treaty (1913), but at that time Agvan Dorjeev was probably not even authorized to negotiate for the Dalai Lama, and Russia ignored the contretemps, and the British did, too.¹²

Great Britain had made it clear that it had no intention of annexing any part of Tibet, and Russia similarly issued a self-denying statement about Mongolia.¹³ The Mongols and Tibetans had no choice but to accept the outcome, which was unsatisfactory to them because they objected to the separation of “Inner” and “Outer” and because they still were not entirely free of Chinese supervision.

The Kalmyk Mongol, Amur-Sanan, proposed Comintern exploitation of the Buddhist infrastructure in Asia in 1921:

It is usually believed that the key to the rich East and India is found in the Muslim countries . . . but . . . there is also a Mongolian-Buddhist route, which starts in the Kalmyk steppes, and leads through Altai, Mongolia, and Tibet, on to India . . . Tibet borders on India; this . . . is the way by which India could establish contact with the center of world revolution-Russia. . . . Agvan Dorjeev . . . is ready to proceed east any time. . . .¹⁴

Agvan Dorjeev came to Moscow from Lhasa in 1921; the Comintern agent, S. S. Borisov (an Altai Oirat-Mongol), was sent to Lhasa in 1922; and the Comintern official, L. Berlin, published an article favorable to Agvan Dorjeev in 1923.¹⁵ It is thus not unlikely that when Nicholas Roerich came from New York City to a Soviet representative in Berlin in December 1924, seeking USSR-authorization to travel through Siberia and Outer Mongolia, en route to Lhasa and after that back to India, he had a good chance for favorable consideration. In any case, the phenomenon did take place: an American-supported refugee Russian, winning Soviet as well as U.S. approval for his travel-plan, and gaining British assistance in getting back to India at the time when he ran into considerable difficulty with Tibetan authorities.

Central Asian expedition

As soon as Nicholas Roerich was assured of financial and other backing in the United States (September 1924), he went clandestinely to Berlin and contacted a Soviet representative there (December 1924) requesting permission to enter USSR territory and also to pursue investigations in Mongolia. The Soviet Commissar for Foreign Affairs, Chicherin, actually knew Nicholas Roerich personally from university days before the 1917 Revolution, and while he apparently made no commitment in 1924, neither did he rule out any possibilities. While the Expedition was basically an American one, much of what it hoped to do depended on Soviet official cooperation. No doubt Roerich's Russian background was a crucial element in obtaining Soviet permission.

While the new Soviet regime had in the early 1920s encouraged Agvan Dorjeev and continued activity in Tibet, the Sino-Soviet split in 1926-7 ended that. The "semi-Russian" Roerich Expedition was just about the last indication of Moscow's interest in Tibet until the late 1950s, and the unfriendly reception of the Roerichs by the Lhasa authorities in 1927 showed the lack of Tibetan interest in Russia then. Nicholas Roerich reported:

We are forbidden to buy food from the population. The caravan slowly perishes. Every day there are new corpses near the tents, and packs of wild dogs noisily divide their new repast. Of 104 caravan animals, 90 perish. Five men die – three Mongol lamas and two Tibetans.¹⁶

None of the later virulent attacks on Nicholas Roerich as a guru or cultist, nor any denigration of the quality of his paintings and stature as an artist, nor the numerous allegations of his espionage (for any one of several countries) should obscure the remarkable feat of the "American Central Asian Cultural Expedition" of 1924-8. That expedition was planned and led by Nicholas Roerich, with both his wife ("E.I.") and his son George as vigorous and active participants. It came close to failure and disaster. The massive physical and political obstacles did not deter him, and the successful completion and return was an epic attainment.

The books which resulted: the better known and more rounded one by George, *Trails to Inmost Asia*, and the less complete but nonetheless important one by Nicholas Roerich, *Altai-Himalaya*, record unique and valuable information: they are indispensable for all those seriously interested in this part of the world. Of particular value are

Nicholas Roerich's description of conditions in Sinkiang in the mid-1920s under Governor-General Yang Tsen-tsin; George Roerich's detailed description of the city of Urga and its monasteries and monuments as they were before the destructive changes of the 1930s; and the material offered in both books about Ja lama and the lingering posthumous effects of this remarkable personality.¹⁷

Accounts published in the USSR in the 1970s attempt to make it out that the Roerichs enjoyed assistance and sustenance from all the common people they met in Sinkiang, Mongolia, and Tibet, and that Soviet diplomatic representatives in those places rendered indispensable help, while British representatives tried to frustrate and undermine them. The facts were otherwise. In their books, both Roerichs express deep appreciation for indispensable assistance from British officials, assistance which beyond doubt saved their lives. But the Russians now are trying to paint the Roerichs as freedom-fighters, as dedicated opponents of colonialism, and as advocates of Soviet liberation for Central Asia and India.

The credit-lines by the Roerichs acknowledging assistance and support, the map of the expedition published in George Roerich's book, the reports and diary-material appearing in both books of the Roerichs, never mention or indicate the Soviet Government, Chicherin, or the visit to Moscow in 1926 (or to Berlin in 1924). The visit to Moscow occurred so quietly as to warrant the use of adjectives such as clandestine or surreptitious. Not only did Nicholas Roerich meet at that time with Chicherin and the Commissar for Education, Lunacharsky, but New York friends of the Roerichs also came to Moscow then, including Maurice Lichtmann, an enthusiastic and unwavering supporter of Nicholas Roerich. An aura of mystery surrounds this part of the "American Expedition." In any case, a side-trip had Lichtmann and his wife accompany the Roerichs to the Altai of Western Siberia – Barnaul and Biisk – investigating Oirat Mongols there. Then the Roerichs proceeded via Novosibirsk, Irkutsk, and Verkhneudinsk (now Ulan Ude), to Urga (now Ulan Bator).

The Roerichs were in Urga for six months (September 1926–April 1927), at a time of considerable political sensitivity. Feng Yu-hsiang had been defeated by Chang Tso-lin, and had gone to Moscow, (May-August 1926); a Kuomintang representative, Ma Ho-tien, was in Urga December 1926–February 1927; the KMT-CCP split at Shanghai occurred in 1927.

Separation from China, de-Sinification in Mongolia, including the expulsion of thousands of Chinese, and closing the MPR-China border in the 1920s, broke the bonds tying Mongolia to Tibet. Purges, civil war, and destruction of the Mongolian Church in the 1930s struck at the most important connecting link. The Dalai Lama charged in 1933:

The present is the time of the Five Kinds of Degeneration in all countries. In the worst class is the manner of working among the Red [Communist] people. They do not allow search to be made for the new incarnation of the Grand Lama of Urga. They have seized and taken away all the sacred objects from the monasteries. They have made monks to work as soldiers. They have broken religion, so that not even the name of it remains.¹⁸

Certainly by the end of the decade of the 1930s it had become true that, "They have broken religion," and not very much remained.

Also during the decade of the 1930s, the Japanese threat escalated, and Japanese advances cut off the MPR even more completely. Purges in the USSR claimed many victims. Tibetan, Sanskrit, Buddhist, and Mongolian studies were drastically reduced and weakened by the purge of outstanding scholars in the USSR.¹⁹

Destruction of the religion in the MPR and the isolation of the country, plus similar destruction in Buryat Mongolia and the Kalmyk Mongolian area in the USSR, and the elimination of so many scholars and specialists, threatened to wipe out a culture. The Roerichs, as Russians living abroad, and continuing to pursue Buddhist, Sanskrit, and Tibetan studies in India, increasingly served in fact as guardians of tradition: guardians of native tradition and of Russian-scholarship tradition.

The outcome of the Russo-Japanese War in 1905 had temporarily broken the Russian connection to Lhasa; Japan manipulated Mongolian Buddhism against China; and Japan, especially in the 1930s, tried to use the religion to wrest Mongolia from Russia and even to encourage Buryat Mongolian revolt against Russia. After the Thirteenth Dalai Lama died in 1933, the Panchen Lama tried to get support for moving the focal point of Buddhism from Lhasa to Pailingmiao and Koko-Nor.²⁰ It began to appear to the Russians all too plausible that a far-reaching “holy war” to “liberate” the MPR was in the making, and that Shambhala, Nicholas Roerich, Teh Wang (an Inner Mongolian leader), the Panchen Lama, White Russians in Manchuria, and Japan – and possibly the United States, too – were involved in it. The several successive probes of the Roerichs toward the MPR border in 1934–5 were quite possibly subversive in nature.

United States Department of Agriculture expedition

Henry Wallace had arranged for the USDA to sponsor an expedition led by Nicholas Roerich to search for drought-resistant grasses in Manchuria and Mongolia, in 1934–5 (June 1934–September 1935). Complaints about the Roerichs from the Department’s specialists, and from the State Department, did not shake Henry Wallace at all and the complaining specialists were demoted for their trouble. Wallace in April 1935 volunteered fulsome praise of Nicholas Roerich in recommending him for the Nobel Peace Prize for his Peace Banner Project. But by September 24, 1935, he broke off all direct contact with the Roerichs, apologized to those he had demoted, and went out of his way to denounce Roerich to all of those to whom he had previously sent recommendations. He wrote Governor Lehman of New York on January 18, 1936: “Without having anything in the way of absolute proof that I can offer, I am convinced that Professor Roerich’s interests are not in the United States but are in the troubled affairs of Asia. [He seems] determined to stop at nothing [to satisfy] some extraordinary fantasy of Asiatic power.”²¹

The Japanese suspected the Roerichs of spying for the Russians; the Russians suspected them of spying for Japan and/or for the United States; the U.S. State Department complained about the contacts with Manchukuo and the public statements about foreign governments; Henry Wallace came to believe they pursued primarily their own glory and power. The Roerichs pressed constantly toward the borders of the MPR and the USSR: to Kanjur, to Barim, to Sunit, to Pailingmiao. The Japanese feared some kind of contact with the Russians.

The Russians, facing a genuine and growing threat from Japan, and under the leadership of the super-suspicious Stalin, had no difficulty in finding justification for suspecting the Roerichs:

Nicholas Roerich was a Russian émigré supported by the American Government and he was traveling around Manchuria and Mongolia with Japanese permission.

Roerich publicity distributed in Manchuria in June and July 1934 included disturbing sentiments: "Professor Roerich has constantly expressed his admiration for Japanese art and culture. He has also constantly voiced his conviction of the splendid destiny of Japan in its advance towards cultural ascendancy."²²

Roerich hired a dozen uniformed Cossacks as guards, and those Cossacks were supporters of Semenov, who had led major anti-Communist forces in the Russian Civil War (and Semenov was still alive in Manchuria).

Roerich armed the Cossack guards with U.S. Army-supplied weapons and ammunition.

Roerich professed belief in "Shambhala" and his support of that idea and of other Buddhist beliefs could unite Mongols, including many religious Mongols who had recently fled from the MPR when their massive anti-Soviet uprising failed.²³

The concept of Shambhala was especially disturbing because Japanese-inspired stories and rumors in Buryat Mongolia in 1935 claimed that Shambhala would come from the rising sun (Japan).

When he was at Pailingmiao, Roerich stayed with Teh Wang, a nationalistic and anti-Communist Mongolian leader who in 1935 shifted his allegiance from the Chinese KMT to acceptance of Japanese support.²⁴

All this was particularly worrisome because a widespread revolt had just been suppressed in the MPR at considerable cost, and the regime there was not completely consolidated. And the memory of von Ungern-Sternberg suggested that even a single adventurer could exert great effect on the superstitious natives and mount a considerable threat. A cable from the U.S. Ambassador in Moscow cited an allegation which "someone" had made to the American Military Attaché:

Nicholas Roerich was formerly a Tsarist officer and has recruited assistance for his expedition from among the followers of the bandit Semenov. This armed party is now making its way toward the Soviet Union ostensibly as a scientific expedition but actually to rally former White elements and discontented Mongols.²⁵

The Roerichs ignored the State Department, and dealt directly with the "Government of Manchukuo," which was not recognized by the United States. Unorthodox procedure worked, for the Roerichs received authorization to travel which had been denied to Roy Chapman Andrews and others, but the State Department disapproved of unorthodox procedure.²⁶ And although the Roerichs were not American citizens (they were traveling on French passports), they were on an official

U.S. Government-sponsored expedition – even though the State Department was not aware of that for some time.

Sino-Soviet relations

Joint and cooperative Sino-Soviet manipulation and exploitation of Buddhism occurred principally 1954–7, when a shift to competitive manipulation and exploitation of Buddhism began. Obviously the Buddhism-Mongolia-Tibet question was part of the larger Sino-Soviet question, and the fate of cooperation between China and Russia would determine the fate of Mongolia-Tibet cooperation and Buddhism's role in their relations.

It appears that a Soviet journalist first was permitted to go to Lhasa in 1954–5 (perhaps the first ethnic Russian ever to get to Lhasa!), and the last Soviet journalist was permitted there in 1959.²⁷ During the friendly years, controlled encouragement of Buddhism took place in both Russia and China (the Buryat monastery of Ivol'ginsk opened, as did the Buddhist seminary in Peking), and both countries began to send delegations and generally to participate in international Buddhist meetings and conferences in places such as Ceylon and Burma.

It was in this brief period of Sino-Soviet friendship and overall encouragement of certain kinds of Buddhist activities that Bulganin and Khrushchev visited India (1955) and George Roerich began to arrange for his return to the USSR. It appeared that the post-Stalin Soviet regime would encourage Tibetan and Buddhist studies, and that Sino-Soviet cooperation would assure Russian access to Tibet. Possibilities for serious scholarship appeared very promising. When George Roerich did return to the USSR in 1957, he was appointed head of an institute of the Academy of Sciences and extensive remodelling of the Leningrad Buddhist temple began under his direction: that temple was to be the headquarters for study of Buddhism, and library and other facilities would be located there.

Joint Sino-Soviet projects were planned, and such academic collaboration was to be fruit of the geopolitical shift which would transform Central Asia into a bridge for cooperation and developing friendship rather than an area separating distrustful rivals and enemies.²⁸ But even as George Roerich arrived in the Soviet Union, warning signs of a shift from Sino-Soviet cooperation to Sino-Soviet competition were evident. Before long, it also became clear that major trouble was brewing in Tibet, where massive resistance to aggressive Chinese integrative measures began. Prospects for open and friendly Mongolia-Tibet relations based on tolerated Buddhism faded. By the time the First Congress of Mongolists took place in Ulan Bator – September 1959 – the likelihood of Sino-Soviet cooperation was receding rapidly. Chinese and Soviet delegates (one of the USSR delegates was George Roerich) came and sparred verbally when they did not pass each other in stony silence (personal observation).

The Chinese delegates to the 1959 Congress in Ulan Bator included Mongols as well as Han Chinese, but did not include Tibetans. When Raghu Vira, the representative from India, spoke of the important Tibet-Mongolia relationship, the Chinese objected, saying, "Everybody knows that Tibet has always been part of China."

The USSR delegation included Buryat Mongols as well as ethnic Russians, but no Buryat Buddhists. Among the MPR citizens at the Congress, Khalkha lamas from the Gandan monastery were in evidence. Photographs in the conference hall, chosen

by Rinchen who carefully orchestrated the preparations, included a portrait of the ancient Tibetan scholar who adapted the Uighur alphabet to the Mongolian language. Other photographs stressed the tradition of Russian scholarship (Vladimirtsov, Kotvich, etc.) and the Buryat intelligentsia (Jamtsarano).

My own reference to Jamtsarano brought vigorous Soviet condemnation, as interference in an “internal Soviet matter,” and that sensitivity, combined with the press attacks on Rinchen then taking place, must have disturbed George Roerich. He had worked closely with Jamtsarano in Urga in 1926–7.²⁹

While the larger hopes and dreams went unfulfilled, the Roerichs did maintain unbroken a thread of continuity for the Tibetan and Mongolian part of Buddhist culture, and also for Russian scholarship. They contributed to transmitting knowledge of a part of the heritage of mankind which had been threatened to the point of extinction by political developments in Russia and China. But George Roerich died suddenly in May 1960, conversion of the Buddhist temple ceased, and Buddhism came under attack in the Soviet Union.³⁰

Just as the negative turn in Sino-Soviet relations in 1926–7 had worked against Nicholas Roerich’s dream of Central Asian and global unity, so the negative turn in Sino-Soviet relations in 1956–7 worked against George Roerich’s attempt to re-establish Russian Buddhist and Tibetan studies. The USSR was most interested in supporting the Roerichs when good relations with China offered a possibility of extending Russian influence, and lost interest when relations with China soured and that possibility faded away. The course of Sino-Soviet relations alternately magnified and reduced the significance of the activities of the Roerichs, father and son.

The Sino-Soviet split in 1926–7, with the defeat of Feng Yu-hsiang by Chang Tso-lin in 1926 and the KMT-CCP break in 1927, frustrated the Mongolia-Tibet relationship which might have been encouraged to develop by the Roerich Expedition at that time. The Sino-Soviet split in the late 1950s and early 1960s frustrated the Mongolia-Tibet connection which might have been encouraged to develop by George Roerich’s return to the USSR in 1957 and the Tibetan and Buddhist studies he led there until his death in 1960.

Soviet-inspired attacks on Rinchen – the Mongolian organizer of the 1959 Congress in Ulan Bator – were already appearing by the time of the meeting³¹ and the Dalai Lama had already fled to India (March 1959), so that Russian approval of Tibetan and Buddhist studies was in doubt. Chinese-Tibetan relations had become violently hostile, and overall Sino-Soviet relations were souring rapidly. The extent of de-Stalinization in the USSR was in question, too. Most of the favorable and optimistic indicators had become warning signals, so that the whole picture which had seemed so bright and promising just a short time before was now full of threatening clouds and menacing sounds. It was a bad time for scholars and liberals in the USSR, China, Mongolia, and Tibet.

At first the effect of the developing Sino-Soviet split appeared to be that the USSR and MPR suppressed Buddhism while China and Tibet encouraged controlled expression of it.³² The Chinese also honored Chinggis Khan, while the USSR and MPR attacked attempts to do that in the MPR. The Chinese were more sympathetic to traditional Mongolia and Tibet than was the Soviet Union. But significant changes began even as Lee’s 1964 article appeared, describing the important difference in Soviet and Chinese policy toward Buddhism. In China the periodical, *Modern Buddhism*,

ceased publication, and in December 1964 the Panchen Lama was denounced and demoted. Anti-religious works began to appear in April 1965, and no more literature even faintly sympathetic to Buddhism appeared after December 1965 in China.

In July 1966 temple-closing was in full swing and the Chinese Buddhist Seminary was declining rapidly. By the end of September all the temples and monasteries were closed. The Cultural Revolution put an end to the relative tolerance which had for a short time differentiated Chinese from Russian practice.³³

When the Asian Buddhists Meeting was held in Ulan Bator in June 1970, plans were announced for opening a seminary for training lamas in the Mongolian capital by the end of the year. The Cultural Revolution-crackdown and the intensifying Sino-Soviet split dramatized at Darnansky Island in 1969 seemed to lead to relative Soviet tolerance of Buddhism compared to Chinese severity. The reputation of the Roerichs and attention devoted to their memory seemed roughly to reflect these shifts.³⁴

Roerichs: Buddhists, Communists, Russian nationalists, and Americans

Chicherin, the USSR's Commissar for Foreign Affairs when Nicholas Roerich came to Moscow in 1926, referred to him as, "half-Buddhist, half-Communist." But two other characteristics applied as well: Russian nationalistic patriot, and adopted American.

Buddhists

Nicholas Roerich's Buddhism included such elements as Shambhala; a major and creative interest in neo-Buddhism (adaptation to the modern world); and belief in serious contribution of Tibetan medicine. George Roerich pursued especially Tibetan and Sanskrit language, including translation of many texts dealing with Shambhala and with Tibetan medicine. The work of the Roerichs encouraged Mongols and Tibetans to study and value their own traditions, and served also to strengthen the Buddhist foundation underlying Mongolian-Tibetan unity.

Communists

Chicherin called Nicholas Roerich half-Communist, and Arthur Schlesinger, Jr., called him an anti-Communist White Russian. Some Soviet writers in the 1930s called him a deserter from Communism and a servant of capitalism, while Soviet writers in the 1970s dismiss such judgment as "absurd." The British delayed Nicholas Roerich's visa-request for several months in 1930 because they suspected him of Communist sympathies, and the Japanese considered him a Communist spy. But the Russians suspected him of being a Japanese spy and a collaborator with anti-Communist White Russians.

The very fact that the Roerichs went to Moscow in 1926, were received by Chicherin and Lunacharsky, and gained crucial permission and support for travel across the USSR and prolonged stay in Mongolia, differentiated them from other would-be traveling scholars. Yet the fact that they traveled extensively in Manchuria and Inner Mongolia in 1934–5 required unusual permission and support from Japan and Japan-dominated Manchukuo – permission and support denied Roy Chapman Andrews, for

example. Presumably the indispensable ingredient was Nicholas Roerich's support by Chicherin in 1926 and by Henry Wallace in 1934.

Nicholas Roerich apparently assisted the Russian Consul-General at Urumchi in Sinkiang in 1926 to prepare an exhibit honoring Lenin, and seems to have assured Chicherin that he encouraged Indians and other Asian natives to look to the USSR for support in "liberation" and opposition to imperialism. He presented himself as "freedom-loving," but neither he nor his son seems ever to have expressed himself in opposition to the destruction of Buddhism in the USSR and MPR and the purge of many scholars they knew and had purported to admire (such as Jamtsarano).³⁵

Many Russian emigres thought of Roerich as soft on Communism. He certainly did not fit Arthur Schlesinger, Jr.'s description of him as an anti-Communist White Russian. George Roerich's ultimate return to the USSR in 1957 must be taken as a sign of some degree of sympathy with the Soviet regime and the ideology it professes.

Russian nationalists

Nicholas Roerich's patriotic-nationalistic roots went deep. He devoted himself especially to ancient Russia, and claimed direct descent from Rurik, the 8th Century Scandinavian who purportedly forged Slav unity. He named his sons for Rurik's son Igor and grandson Svyatoslav. His first scholarly work involved archaeological search for signs of Russia's beginnings and myth and folklore dealing with such matters supplied subjects for his first paintings. His interest in the ancient and primitive provided the basis for his collaboration with Igor Stravinsky on *Rite of Spring* in 1910-1912.³⁶

Apparently for reasons of health, he brought his family out of Russia in 1916. Soon after the Bolshevik Revolution, Gorky appealed to intellectuals who had left the homeland to return and throw in their lot with the Revolution, but Nicholas Roerich did not respond to that appeal. Instead he went to Paris and then New York. But he appears never to have become a "typical" White Russian emigre. In 1924 he published an article indicating faith in Russia's future which caused other emigres to attack him, and his trips to Berlin and Moscow in 1924 and 1926 have already been mentioned.

At Harbin in 1934-5 he caused controversy in the large and ultra-conservative White Russian colony as he seemed to accept Stalin's Communist Russia as a legitimate defender of the country against Japanese aggression. He broke with an old friend, Sven Hedin, because of Hedin's support of Hitler. By 1940 Nicholas Roerich, then in India, was writing enthusiastically patriotic articles about the wonderful Russian people and the great "Red Flag." When Germany attacked the USSR, George Roerich volunteered for the Red Army (the offer was not accepted). Nicholas Roerich auctioned paintings for the benefit of the Russian war effort, and he accepted the post of honorary chairman of a New York-based organization of Americans sympathetic to Russia: ARKA, American-Russian Cultural Association, which was known to maintain close contact with the Soviet Embassy in Washington, D.C.³⁷ Nicholas Roerich died in India in 1947, and his wife died there a few years later.

George Roerich's return to Russia in 1957 has already been mentioned; his arranging for re-establishing his father's reputation as well as his own work in reforging the link to traditional scholarship in Buddhist-Tibetan-Sanskrit studies were more "Russian

nationalistic” than Soviet Communist in character. George Roerich died in Moscow in 1960 and was buried in Novodevichy Cemetery.

Americans

Nicholas Roerich might be said to have been as American as the one-dollar bill, thanks to his part in inspiring use of the reverse side of the Great Seal on the currency. He wrote to Henry Wallace in March 1934: “For the past 35 years I have been working in the interests of the United States and during the last decade, I have been working in the behalf of this country as an officer of an American institution [the Roerich Society]. . . .” The Central Asian Expedition of 1924–8 was American-financed, and Nicholas Roerich sent a cable to New York as soon as he returned to India (May 24, 1928) announcing that the, “peaceful American flag encircled Central Asia.” The USDA sponsored the 1934–5 Expedition to Manchuria and Inner Mongolia. A 1931 publication of the Roerich Museum indicated, “the belief of Nicholas Roerich . . . that America is the soil of fulfilment of the history and tradition of all mankind.”³⁸

Nicholas Roerich was actually in the United States from September 1920, to August 1923; in September 1924; June to November 1929; and March–May 1934. But his American disciples and supporters were always very active, and the most notable physical manifestation of the influence of the Roerichs in the United States was the 29-story building housing the Roerich Museum, which opened in October 1929. *Time Magazine* noted in 1947 that, “in the early 1930s Roerich was at the pinnacle of worldly fame as painter and poet, Asiatic explorer, archaeologist and mystic philosopher.”³⁹

The connection with Henry Wallace developed from two major themes characteristic of both men: interest in the mystical and the occult, along with finding fascination in arcane signs and symbols; and a passion for world peace and global unity, a kind of pacifism. The Roerich Society and Museum also made cultural unity of North and South America a major emphasis. Henry Wallace’s enthusiasm for Roerich’s plans for peace and protection of works of art and cultural monuments in time of war, combined with the Administration’s proclaimed interest in Latin America, resulted in major publicity efforts which enhanced Roerich’s public reputation. A so-called Roerich Peace Banner Convention at the Mayflower Hotel in Washington in November 1933 was particularly well-publicized, and adoption of Roerich’s peace plan by Latin American nations early in 1935 was noted with favor by FDR in a speech in April 1935.⁴⁰

Nicholas’s son, George, pursued undergraduate and graduate education in London, at Harvard University in the U.S., and at the Sorbonne in Paris. He studied with a leading Sanskrit specialist at Harvard, Charles Lanman, and with the noted Mongolist, Paul Pelliot in Paris. The first issue of the journal published by the Roerichs in India in 1931 was dedicated to Lanman.

Probably due to the stock market crash and the Great Depression, the Roerichs lost control of the 29-story building and museum in 1936, when Henry Wallace and a former Roerich disciple, Louis Horch, had combined forces against the Roerichs. The Internal Revenue Service began to demand back taxes, and extensive and acrimonious litigation about the building was taking place. In addition, Nicholas Roerich sued the United Press for libel, probably involving newspaper allegations of espionage. The fine Tibetan library and all the many aspects of Tibetan culture represented at the

building were lost: a visitor's letter to the *New York Times* in September 1936 expressed saddened complaint about the loss of atmosphere, the despoiled chapel, the many missing pictures. It seems particularly ironic that this outstanding manifestation of Tibetan culture in the United States was lost at almost the same time as Stalin's regime closed the Tibetan temple in Leningrad and then converted it to unrelated purposes. The later political brouhaha around the "guru letters" included virulent attacks in 1947–8 on Nicholas Roerich and Henry Wallace's connection with him, by Westbrook Pegler, a newspaper columnist widely known for his invective and vindictiveness. After the break with Henry Wallace and loss of control of the Museum, the Roerichs had moved their operations entirely to northern India, at Kulu. The political reverberations of the Henry Wallace affair continued for more than ten years after the break of the two men in the fall of 1935. Both Nicholas and George must have felt considerable bitterness and disillusionment about the United States.

Essaying some comparisons of father and son, the first thing notable is the remarkable closeness of the two; they were hardly ever separated until Nicholas Roerich died. The father obviously exercised tremendous influence on his son, who was in many ways his creature, an extension of himself. But the dimension of mysticism and the "guru" quality so notable in Nicholas seems to have been largely lacking in George. Nor was George a painter (Svyatoslav seems to have inherited that aspect of his father's gifts). George was far more pragmatic and realistic, much less inspired and cosmic. Nicholas was more "Oriental"; George more "Western." Nicholas was more prophet and preacher; George more the scholar. George was the linguist extraordinary, which his father was not. Both were to some extent "used" and exploited by the Soviet regime, and their reputations and heritage continue to be so exploited. But they played a part in overcoming Stalin's attempt at cultural destruction, and they helped to provide continuity of Russian tradition, history, and scholarship. Their work would undoubtedly have been much more important politically if the course of Sino-Soviet relations and U.S.-Soviet relations had run differently.

Persistent Central Asian themes

Westernization

Western influence stressed activism and commitment and decried fatalism and detachment. Many Westerners assumed their own superiority, and with Macaulay judged native culture to comprise nothing more than, "monstrous superstition, false history, false astronomy, false medicine, false religion." But other Westerners studied the native culture and even taught the indigenes things they did not know about. They often served as powerful catalysts for renewed tradition, for a "renaissance."

Westerners interested in the native culture, studying it and sometimes even adopting it, inevitably imposed Western values and a Western approach onto the Oriental base and many varieties of syncretism resulted. Sympathetic Westerners embodied both West and East, Europe and Asia. Claude Bragdon described Nicholas Roerich: "Although he represents the summit of European accomplishments and culture, Roerich is deeply Oriental in his temperament, sympathies and point of view."

Natives who adjusted to Western incursions by studying Western languages and Western ways, to varying degrees "became Westerners," so that a continuum developed

from unsympathetic Westerners convinced of their own superiority and local native inferiority, to sympathetic Westerners who thought the East had something to teach them, to Westernized natives, to unchanged traditional ones. Thus there were several bridges from West to East and *vice versa*.

Westerners sympathetic to Asians and finding positive values and contributions in Asian philosophy and religion were often the ones critical of their own societies and cultures. They were often seeking for satisfaction and fulfilment which eluded them at home. Nicholas Roerich seems to have been on a "mystical quest," Henry Wallace's "spiritual hunger remained unsatisfied. Wallace studied Buddhism, Judaism, Confucianism, Mohammedanism, Zoroastrianism, and Christian Science. His religion became an amalgam of these beliefs."^{40a} In the case of Russia, several of the outstanding Orientalists were Siberian exiles, and were socialists and liberals. Their sympathy and support for natives and their ways was related to their discontent with their own government and the values of their own society.

Macaulay even argued in 1835 that Westerners were responsible for native discontent with Western domination. "From the native society left to itself we have no difficulties to apprehend; all the murmuring will come from that oriental interest which we have, by artificial means, called into being, and nursed into strength."⁴¹ That is, the Westerners who encouraged positive evaluation of the native culture fed and made more effective a political opposition. Scholars partly served imperialism, but they also served anti-imperialism. Both support and opposition derived from Westerners, vs. other Westerners. In Macaulay's view, the only serious opposition developed from Westerners who were traitors to their own Western values. And there really was no such thing as "objective scholarship" which did not serve one side or the other in fact if not in intent.

Sir Francis Younghusband in 1910 characterized Tibetan Buddhism with such words as, "pacifying . . . sloth . . . decadence . . . lazy . . . withdrawn from the world . . . degraded. . . ." He also judged, "if the Tibetans had been Mohammedans, we should not have crushed Lhasa as easily as we did." Holmes Welch remarked on the passiveness of the Buddhists: "They never resisted anything that was done to them." Prejevalsky thought Buddhism, "was a pretext for idleness [which] sapped vitality and hindered progress."⁴²

But Colin Wilson and other Western sympathizers insisted that it was actually a source of "psychokinetic energy." Gurjiev notoriously stressed hard work, and Roerich in *Foundations of Buddhism* challenged conventional wisdom: "Among some Western Scholars it has been an accepted opinion to regard Buddhism as the Teaching of despair and inaction, which does not at all correspond to its fundamental character. . . . Superficial investigators [hold an] opinion of the Teaching of Buddha as one of despair [but in fact] it is the way of the greatness of labor."⁴³

Western explorers and scholars often energized at least some of the natives and inspired them to new examination of their culture. Interest of Westerners in the indigenous culture often awakened natives' pride in their roots which replaced former neglect or rejection.⁴⁴

E. F. Knight in 1897 noted, of Tibetan Buddhism, "The priests themselves have long since forgotten the signification of the many complicated ceremonies, forms, and symbols of their religion, and all that remains is an unmeaning superstition."⁴⁵ In many cases Westerners rediscovered meaning and reawakened serious interest. The

importance of Westerners to native politics and attitudes was very great. The fact that Nicholas Roerich was responsible for the version of neo-Buddhism which circulated in Mongolia in the 1920s indicates the importance of the Western contribution. The Buryat Mongol, Jamtsarano, who propagated that neo-Buddhism, had been educated in St. Petersburg and served as apprentice to the Russian scholar, Kotvich, on archaeological expeditions in Mongolia. Vladimirtsov's study of the Mongolian language and George Roerich's study of Tibetan and Sanskrit inspired Mongols and Tibetans to follow their lead. It became a point of honor and prestige for the natives to have studied with leading scholars. The official Mongolian denunciation of Rinchen in 1976 accused the Mongolian scholar of having exaggerated the extent of his study and relationship with Vladimirtsov. When George Roerich returned to Russia in 1957 his knowledge and active organizational activity served as a catalyst which intensified the significance of the work of the Buryat Mongols, Rinchen in the MPR and Dandaron in Buryat Mongolia.⁴⁶

Western-educated Buryats were indispensable to the Russians in Mongolia and Tibet.⁴⁷ Macaulay in 1835 had noted the important role for acculturated natives:

We must at present do our best to form a class who may be interpreters between us and the millions whom we govern: a class of persons, Indian in blood and color, but English in taste, in opinions, in morals, and in intellect. To that class we may leave it to refine the vernacular dialects of the country, to enrich those dialects with terms of science borrowed from the Western nomenclature, and to render them by degrees fit vehicles for conveying knowledge to the great mass of the population.⁴⁸

Buddhism

Buddhism served partly to provide separate and unique identity to Mongols and Tibetans, helping them to resist assimilation by Chinese and/or Russians. Pan-Buddhism was one element in a nascent native nationalism. Buryat Mongols in Russia used Lamaist Buddhism as a tool for resistance to Russification, and Tibetans used their religion similarly to resist the Chinese, and also to hold off the British when they threatened to move northward from India. Both religious leaders – the Dalai Lama in Tibet and the Jebtsun Damba Khutukhtu in Mongolia – became political symbols of independence, and their fate became the political fate of their countries.

In attempting to deal with Mongolia and Tibet as a Buddhist cultural unit, Nicholas and George Roerich became actors and pawns in the larger games of the relations of Russia with Great Britain, China, and the United States. Pan-Buddhism failed because the larger and more powerful countries divided Central Asia to suit their interests and Central Asian unity was a casualty. The hopes and dreams of the Roerichs were also casualties. Great power interests inevitably added political interest and effect to the investigation and activities of the Roerichs, and they were variously accused of serving as spies for Russia, or for the Dalai Lama, or of having been agents of capitalism against the Soviet Union.

The aspects of Lamaist Buddhism in which Nicholas Roerich was particularly involved included (to repeat them again here): the concept of Shambhala; matters of the occult and mystical as expressed in the syncretic philosophy of theosophy;

neo-Buddhism as an attempt to modernize and adapt traditional Lamaism; and Tibetan medicine. In addition, George Roerich studied the Tibetan language.

Shambhala

Shambhala as a Promised Land, a coming Paradise where Goodness would rule and Virtue would triumph, “has always been a cherished subject among the ascetics and holy men of Tibet. For centuries legends and a vast oral tradition have accumulated.”⁴⁹ Shambhala was a mystical region reputedly the ancient source of much of Lamaist Buddhism’s teachings, and also the future Utopia, the New Era, the true renaissance. “Throughout the entire Buddhist world the rocks on the roadsides . . . point out the approaching future. From the most ancient times until now this Image has been erected by Buddhists who know the approach of the New Era. In our day, venerable lamas . . . travel through the Buddhist countries, erecting new images of the Symbol of aspirations towards the radiant future.”⁵⁰

The concept of Shambhala was extensively manipulated politically. A remarkable Buryat Mongolian lama, Agvan Dorjeev, who greatly influenced the Dalai Lama at the turn of the Twentieth Century, portrayed Shambhala as coming to Tibet from Russia.⁵¹ The Tsar was portrayed as the “White Tsar” who would serve as an instrument of salvation for Tibet.⁵²

Nicholas Roerich found a lively interest in Shambhala in Urga in 1926; he presented a painting on the subject to the Mongols and then they asked him to design a shrine for it. *Foundations of Buddhism* indicates, “The dates are approaching. The image is ready to rise,” and Nicholas Roerich recorded in 1926, “When the image . . . will reach Urga, then will flash the first light of the New Era-truth. Then will the true renaissance of Mongolia begin.”⁵³ Nicholas Roerich reported hearing many songs and having much discussion about Shambhala when he was in Inner Mongolia in 1934–5. The Panchen Lama elaborated a version in Peking in 1934, and G. D. R. Phillips described Japan’s use of the concept among the Buryat Mongols as an anti-Russian tactic.⁵⁴

Occult, mystical, and theosophy

A famous Russian Orientalist, Serge Oldenburg, delivered a eulogy for Ivan Pavlovich Minaev (1840–1890) which discussed East and West in an interesting way and at a time and place which justify relating it to Nicholas Roerich’s thought and development. Minaev found the essential difference between East and West to be religion. The Westerner’s applied intelligence and expanding use of science increasingly challenges his original religious faith and denies it, stifles it. But the Asian refuses to accept the limits of science and continues to insist on going beyond personal experience and even personal existence. He fantasizes and speculates and refuses to be limited by the restrictions and boundaries inherent in Western science.⁵⁵

Another intellectual strand that affected Nicholas Roerich came via Mme Helena Petrovna Blavatsky (“HPB”) (1831–1891), who founded the Theosophical Society in 1875. Arthur Schlesinger, Jr. later referred to Nicholas Roerich as, “a White Russian mystic in the tradition of Blavatsky.”⁵⁶ Interest in the occult reached a high level in the 1890s and Mircea Eliade suggests that the Russian Orthodox Church particularly

encouraged mystical experience. In any case, Roerich fits into a tradition encompassing Blavatsky, Uspensky, Gurjiev, and Rasputin. That kind of interest found counterpart and response in Buddhism. And meanwhile Indian and other Asian intellectuals were exploring Western political ideas: Tagore published his article on socialism in 1892.

Tibet, Mongolia, the Gobi Desert, the Himalayas: here would be found elusive secrets. Blavatsky's famous, *The Veil of Isis* (1886), included:

Around no other locality . . . hang so many traditions as around the Gobi Desert. . . . The whole district is under the ban of a mighty spell. . . . The district of the Gobi wilderness and in fact the whole area of independent Tartary and Tibet is jealously guarded against foreign intrusion. . . . The time will come, sooner or later, when the dreadful sand of the desert will yield up its long-buried secrets . . . accounts of magical exhibitions (have been) witnessed and recorded by travellers of every age who had visited Tartary and Tibet. . . . From one end to the other the country is full of mystics, religious philosophers, Buddhist saints, and magicians. Belief in a spiritual world, full of invisible beings . . . is universal. . . . The great sandy Desert of Gobi [has been] looked on as the dwelling place of malignant beings, from days of hoary antiquity."⁵⁷

Many skeptics believed the fantastic claims to contain more than a little fraud and charlatanism, and an aura of disreputability as well as of cosmic communication hung around theosophy and mysticism. When this kind of mystical element surfaced in America in the 1940s in the form of the Nicholas Roerich-Henry Wallace "guru letters," it caused a mighty scandal and involved considerable political danger for Wallace and for FDR.

Neo-Buddhism

The attempt to modernize Buddhism and retain its basic thrust while abandoning many of its superstitions and encrustations and grafting onto it at least parts of modern science and technology caused three main reactions:

1. The effort is not worth the trouble, because the errors are so fundamental and the feudal past so deeply embedded that Buddhism ought to be completely abandoned, and buried as dead philosophy and religion offering nothing constructive or useful.
2. Adaptation and compromise would be transitional on the road to complete abandonment. Neo-Buddhism would provide a way-station on the route to modernization, in the path of getting from a feudal past to a 20th Century present. Grandfather was a Buddhist, father a neo-Buddhist, and son would be a modern secular man.
3. Buddhism embodies substantive and eternal values which we abandon at our peril. There really is a "Wisdom of the East" which has much to teach Western man. The spiritual teachings ought to be pursued by everybody everywhere; they embody universal truths and no one is a complete person who does not study them and follow them in the way he lives. Nicholas Roerich was clearly a subscriber to Number Three.

1. Immediate elimination

Outside observers commonly judged the Mongols and Tibetans – in great part due to their religion – to be superstitious, corrupt, cruel, passive, diseased, and moribund. Macaulay in 1832 insisted that Asians had nothing worthwhile to offer, and that public monies should not be used to propagate falsehoods. A Buryat Mongolian leader (Mikhail Nikolaevich Bogdanov, 1878–1919) in 1907 argued much the same way as Macaulay: compromising and modernizing traditional Buddhism and the traditional language simply were not worth the bother. There is essentially nothing worth saving. To hang onto it is to prolong error. Encouraging Mongolian and Tibetan languages is error, too: Russian would serve much better to prepare Buryat Mongols for the 20th Century and they might as well concentrate on learning it.⁵⁸

The 8th Mongolian Party Congress of 1930 judged that neo-Buddhism was, “an even more dangerous ideological force than reactionary Lamaism, because it makes more difficult separation of the people from the influence of the lamas. . . .” The 1951 *Great Soviet Encyclopedia (BSE)* judged neo-Buddhism to be no more than a trick: “The ideologists of the exploiting class have tried to dress up Buddhism. . . . Bourgeois manipulators attempted to utilize Buddhism in the service of a perfidious deism.” In 1958 Chang Chin-i argued that modernized and modified Buddhism would, “encourage erroneous religious views.” In the USSR, Kochetov in 1960 and also in later years attacked any and all varieties of Buddhism: no compromise could make it acceptable. An official Chinese statement in 1963 argued that accepting any version inherited from the past would set a stamp of approval, “on the thought of the exploiting classes . . . , and will inexorably lead people to worship the ancients blindly.” Chiang Ching in 1966 put a rhetorical question: “. . . Gods, ghosts, and religion. How can we judiciously accept such things? I think we cannot. For we are atheists, we are Communists and basically we do not believe there are such things in the world as ghosts and gods.”⁵⁹

2. Tactical tolerance

But unless the authorities were prepared for the bloody cost which would result from a frontal attack, gradualism was advisable. Damba Dorji of the MPR pointed out to Anna Louise Strong in 1926:

Our present slogan is. “For a purer Buddhism.” We could not possibly attack the Buddhist religion. We aim rather to weaken the influence of the lamas by going to the original teachings of Buddha which do not recognize property, or monasteries. or all these embroideries of ceremony and power that the lamas have built. We deprive the lamas of political rights, . . . We also tax them. . . . But it is a hard problem. For 300 years the people have learned to reverence lamas. They will not unlearn in six years.⁶⁰

Tactical tolerance and reliance on slow phaseout rather than immediate elimination put off a showdown. Many Buddhists themselves felt, “that their religions are largely outdated and irrelevant,” and, “discount the plans of their leftist allies to extirpate religion.” Increasingly their self-deception led to fatal compromises. Holmes Welch is

certainly right in his devaluation of Communist tolerance: “Mao . . . permitted his underlings to use Buddhism for strictly political purposes until he grew impatient with the charade and let it be swept away with the rest of the Four Olds.”⁶¹

3. Genuine substantive philosophy and religion, science, Communism

Taking Buddhism seriously and not simply tolerating it until it evaporated, faced three serious challenges, which had to be dealt with: corruption and superstition which discredited the doctrine; the inroads of modern science; and the threat of Communism.

Nicholas Roerich’s version of neo-Buddhism was important not only for any virtue and conviction in its presentation, but also practically because it constituted a handbook and guide for Jamtsarano and other Mongols in the 1920s when they attempted to resist religious suppression. Nicholas Roerich’s version insisted that the true teachings meant activism and hard work, not passivity and withdrawal and fatalistic acceptance. He claimed that Buddhist teachings actually forecast modern science, that they were eminently modern and “with it,” and they were certainly not indefensible superstition, or illogical and anti-scientific. He argued that Buddhism honored learning, study, and education, and did not entail illiteracy and uncritical rote recitation. He insisted that Buddhism meant equality, social justice, and universal peace, and it did not mean feudalism and exploitation of the masses by a few wealthy lamas. He said it means non-exclusiveness, universalism, and peace. He saw Buddhism as optimistic, as promising a radiant and happy future, better than any yet seen on earth.

Roerich did not see “his kind of Buddhism” actually in existence anywhere, certainly not in Tibet: “We distinguish two Tibets: one is the Tibet of officialdom – so much prejudice and violence and falsehood, who desecrate art and petrify learning. . . . We also discern another Tibet, even though it is smaller in numbers. This is the Tibet of the few educated lamas and of an even smaller number of enlightened laymen. This is the Tibet which guards the essence of the teaching and aspires toward enlightenment. It is the Tibet of its spiritual leaders.” *Foundations of Buddhism* indicated: “in Tibet a lessening of the religious interest is apparent. . . . The religious life. . . . has become dormant.” Younghusband, not usually very sympathetic, in 1910 somewhat grudgingly admitted a core of sincere belief:

The religion of the Tibetans is but of a degraded form. Yet one does see gleams of real good radiating through. . . . Deep down under the dirty crust there must be some hidden source of strength in these lamas, or they would not exert the influence they do. Millions of men over hundreds of years are not influenced entirely by chicanery and fraud. . . . Here [in the Jokang temple] I found the true inner spirit of the people. The Mongols from their distant deserts, the Tibetans from their mountain homes, seemed here to draw some hidden source of power. And when from the far recesses of the temple came the profound booming of great drums, the chanting of monks in deep reverential rhythm, the blare of trumpets, the clash of cymbals and the long rolling of lighter drums, I seemed to catch a glimpse of the source from which they drew. . . . In the deep rhythmic droning of the chants, the muffled rumbling of the drums, the loud clang and blaring of cymbals and trumpets,

I realized this sombre people touching their inherent spirit, and, in the way most fitted to them, giving vent to its mighty surgings panting for expression.⁶²

Besides the substantive belief, Lamaism was a complex and multifaceted culture in Mongolia and Tibet, providing social customs, esthetic satisfactions, and variety and relief from an often dull and difficult existence. It met a wide variety of daily needs in this life as well as dealing with eternal verities and cosmology.

Macaulay derided Oriental “science,” which in his opinion included, “medical doctrines which would disgrace an English veterinarian; astronomy which would move laughter in girls at an English boarding school; history abounding with beings thirty feet high and reigns thirty thousand years long; and geography made up of seas of treacle and seas of butter.” Conze admitted that, “The dharma cannot be heard in a world dominated by modern science and technical progress. A great deal of adaptation is needed . . .”⁶³

But the Roerich version in *Foundations of Buddhism* found a great deal of modern science in traditional Buddhism:

The foundations of the Buddhist philosophical teaching . . . reveal an extraordinary affinity with . . . the latest, the newest achievements, in the domain of our scientific world concept. . . . How greatly the statements of the Teacher are confirmed by the achievements of our contemporary science. The same results which Einstein reached by way of experiment were reached by ancient Buddhists through a purely contemplative way.

. . . Radiation . . . is indicated as of a luminous and most subtle quality which surrounds man and is the nearest inward factor of human perception. . . . Nowadays this radiation is known to Europeans under the name of “aura” It has been scientifically proved that not only all human and animal organisms possess it, but even trees, plants, and stones.

. . . Contemporary scientific data support the theory of Karma expounded in Buddhism. Contemporary science teaches us that each generation of man is heir to the distinctive characteristics of preceding generations . . .

What is dharma, if not energy . . . ? All sense-perceptions are exclusively energy effects and energy is the only real existing entity . . . His affirmations about thought acting at a distance antedate our researches in the domain of thought-transmission and wireless. . . . Thought is energy. . . . Buddha is our predecessor in many domains of knowledge.⁶⁴

Already in the 1890s in Buryat Mongolia, the traditional curriculum in the monasteries was being supplemented with Western science. Jamtsarano published a Mongolian-language newspaper in Urga after 1911 (and before 1917) in which he systematically included modern science, geography, and history – but when he said the world was round he got into serious trouble with the local hierarchy, and he had to pull back, Younghusband, too, reported that in Lhasa, “He [the Abbot serving the Dalai Lama] corrected me when I inadvertently let slip some observation implying that the earth was round, and assured me that when I had lived longer in Tibet and had time to study, I should find that it was not round, but flat, and not circular, but triangular, like the bone of a shoulder of mutton.”⁶⁵

Jamtsarano served in the 1920s as the leader of the Mongolian Scientific Committee and published an important Mongolian language geography which was entirely modern, but Jamtsarano himself retained many superstitions and was a living example of the East-West combination and conflict.

“Since our Party’s main goal and the main doctrine of Buddhism are both aimed at helping the masses, they should not be antagonistic, rather they should be complementary.” So stated Jamtsarano to the Mongolian Communist Youth Group meeting in 1926.⁶⁶ The Roerichs and Jamtsarano were in agreement about this, and the Communist regime temporarily and reluctantly agreed. But it is now attacked as having been, “ill-conceived policy which was a retreat from the Party policy regarding religion and beliefs.” Holmes Welch reports circulation of the pamphlet, “The New Meaning of Buddhist Doctrine,” in China in 1950 (Ch’en Ming-shu, author), “really trying to fit the spirit of Buddhism into the new era.”⁶⁷ *Foundations of Buddhism* was circulating as an anonymous pamphlet in Urga in 1926.

Attempting to make Buddhism tolerable in Communist society tends to de-emphasize the other-worldly, spiritual aspects, and emphasize the secular ones. Much is made of equality, social justice, brotherhood, non-discriminatory practice. The attempt is made to present Buddhism as socially progressive.⁶⁸ But the Communists usually assess it as feudal and exploitative, and deny the assertion that exploitation derives from “bad Buddhists” who do not practice the pure “good” doctrine.

Collective living, communal ownership, joint decision-making, simplicity, all could be claimed with some legitimacy as characteristic Buddhist manners perfectly compatible with Communist theory and practice. Denial of private property also fits both doctrines.

An important incentive for the Communist regimes to tolerate Buddhism is its influence in relations with non-Communist Buddhist countries.⁶⁹ But Holmes Welch points out that even manipulated Buddhism keeps the faith alive and lessens the likelihood of complete disappearance. The regimes also use Buddhists in their peace propaganda: tame Buddhists call for scrapping the neutron bomb, etc.

The argument presented by this author twenty years ago that, “The official Buddhist Church in Outer Mongolia today is a travesty, maintained mainly to impress foreigners and particularly for Communist propaganda in other Buddhist countries of Asia,” inspired an outraged Mongolian reaction: “Worthy of astonishment is the author’s affirmation that . . . in the Communist countries of Asia, Buddhism has been converted into merely a means of Communist propaganda to impress foreigners. Such an absurd statement is probably not taken as truth even by American readers.”⁷⁰ But twenty years ago and today, the statement stands.

Tibetan medicine

Tibetan medicine comprised an important part of the work at the Roerich Institute of Himalayan Studies, “Urusvati” (Light of the Morning Star), at Kulu in northern India, in the early 1930s. George Roerich carefully studied Tibetan medical literature.⁷¹

Many years earlier, a famous Buryat Mongol who enjoyed the sponsorship of Tsar Alexander III himself, Petr Aleksandrovich Badmaev (1851–1919), was famed and popular in St. Petersburg society in the late 19th and early 20th Centuries for his practice of Tibetan medicine. He knew Witte and Rasputin well, and was involved in

numerous political and other schemes and proposals. Badmaev translated works of Tibetan medicine in a popular, modified, and modernized form. Two of his nephews continued similar work in the 1920s: Vladimir in Warsaw (he died in 1923), and Nikolai in Moscow (known to have published an article on the subject in *Izvestiya* in 1935).⁷²

Tibetan medicine related to neo-Buddhism, and the rate at which Western-trained doctors were provided represented an important element in the retention or rejection of traditional religion. Lama-doctors constituted a significant part of the appeal and popularity of Buddhism in Mongolia and Tibet.⁷³

Tibetan language

George Roerich was a gifted linguist who wrote extensively about and translated from the Tibetan language. He noted the substantial Tibetan influence on the Mongolian language, and the widespread use of Tibetan in Mongolia. That influence and usage occurred mainly among the lamas, and indeed the Church-language in Mongolia was Tibetan, much as Latin used to be in the Roman Catholic Church.⁷⁴

The long-time Stalinist political leader in Mongolia, Choibalsan, complained in 1938 about the Church and its use of Tibetan.⁷⁵ Literacy, abysmally low in traditional Mongolia, was much higher among the lamas than among the population at large, and among these lamas, literacy was more often in Tibetan than Mongolian. The religious connection and the Tibetan language connection were essentially the same. For a long time the Church schools in Mongolia enrolled far more pupils than did secular ones, and Tibetan was part of the curriculum, and sometimes was even the sole vehicle of instruction.

George Roerich's expertise in Tibetan, and his return to the USSR in 1957, emphasized the significance of Tibetan in Mongolia and it focussed attention on the tradition of Russian studies in Tibetan language and the Buddhist religion which had been broken by Stalin's bloody purges. George Roerich's efforts began to overcome the destruction and neglect of a field of academic-scholar activities which had once been a pride of Russia. So Mongolia was reminded of its religious heritage and Russia was reminded of its scholarly heritage. George Roerich's Tibetan studies reawakened a dormant past.

If Sino-Soviet relations had not deteriorated so rapidly, and if George Roerich had a longer time to work in the USSR, a connection of Russia and Mongolia to Tibet might have been re-established. In the brief Sino-Soviet friendship period Soviet scholars had already carried on research and written books about Sinkiang, the Dungans, and Inner Mongolia.⁷⁶ Tibet would probably also have become a field of active Russian scholarship, and perhaps even political ambition, too. But Sino-Soviet relations did deteriorate rapidly, and George Roerich died soon after he had returned to the Soviet Union. Other Russians and Mongols who tried to maintain and build on the tradition and strengthen the work begun by George Roerich faced an unfavorable climate as the Sino-Soviet split widened and deepened.⁷⁷

The aborted attempt to reawaken Mongolia-Tibet ties included also {drew} attention to the related linguistic connection to Sanskrit, and thus to the old linguistic, cultural, and religious ties to India. The deterioration in Sino-Soviet relations and the death of George Roerich in 1960, with the concomitant cutoff of Tibetan, Sanskrit, and Buddhist studies struggling to be reborn in Russia, weakened the potential for renewed historical,

linguistic, and academic-scholarly activity. But the official line is that, "Soviet scientists treat the rich cultural heritage of Buddhism with the greatest care . . ."78

China

A long list of liabilities weakened China in Mongolia and Tibet, and restricted its influence in regard to the Lamaist Buddhism practiced in those areas:

1. Near-anarchy, civil war, ineffectiveness of the central government in Peking, and lack of a reliable army represented major threats to China's retention of Mongolia and Tibet and exercise of control there.
2. Traditional Chinese arrogance and Great Han Chauvinism resulted in almost total lack of interest in or even curiosity about other cultures and peoples.⁷⁹
3. The very large number of Chinese always posed a potential threat of forced assimilation and Sinification. The U.N. report of the 1959 Tibetan revolt referred to "genocide."
4. The Chinese were almost as backward and superstitious as the Mongols and Tibetans, so that Chinese takeover and domination would not represent compensatory advantages such as modern education and science.⁸⁰
5. There existed no Chinese equivalent of the Roerichs: no Westernized intelligentsia devoted to studying national minorities and empathizing with them.
6. There existed no Chinese equivalent of the Buryat Mongols, no individuals comparable to Agvan Dorjeev, to serve as cultural bridge and ease transitions.
7. Russia, Great Britain, and also Japan, often restricted free exercise of Chinese sovereignty. U.S. interest in Tibet, Buddhism Mongols, and the Dalai Lama also implied limitations on Chinese control.⁸¹
8. The Dalai Lama's sense of independence and his readiness to flee from Lhasa and take refuge abroad – in Outer Mongolia in 1904–5, in India in 1910–11 and again since 1959 -limited China's effectiveness.
9. There were sufficient differences between Chinese Buddhism, and Tibetan and Mongolian Buddhism, so that even those Chinese who were Buddhists did not overcome the ethnic barrier.
10. The Panchen Lama, who was under Chinese protection and domination, was outside Tibet for so long (1923 until his death in 1937, and the next one from birth until 1952), and the title of the successor chosen by the Chinese was so tainted, that he really did not constitute an effective rival to the Dalai Lama.⁸²

The assumption of power by the Communists in 1949 completely changed many of these liabilities and substantially modified the others. An effective central government and the reliable PLA represented the most important change, which was too late to save China's position in Outer Mongolia, but not for Tibet. The problem of Han chauvinism continued to be a serious one after 1949, too, but some efforts have been made to combat it. Large numbers of Han Chinese have moved into Inner Mongolia and Sinkiang but not so many into Tibet, and reports indicate more careful separation from the native Tibetans.

"New China" of course does include education, health, and at least some science, and Tibet benefits from them in much the same fashion as the rest of China. Serious

study of traditional Tibet and Buddhism seems still to be rare-to-nonexistent. The Chinese Buddhist Association apparently controls Tibetan Buddhism just as much as it does Chinese Buddhism, so that there is very likely a forced unity formerly not the case. Peking has since 1976 issued what amount to “invitations” to the Dalai Lama to return, but he remains skeptical, undoubtedly with good reason. The Dalai Lama in a 1978 statement went out of his way to pay tribute to the Panchen Lama as a worthy and honorable man and to avoid any semblance of rivalry or challenge.⁸³

Great Britain and India

The emphasis of Nicholas Roerich and the Theosophists on the genuine value of native philosophy and religion and the impetus that Western endorsement gave to native pride in its own roots, tended to serve anti-British and anti-colonial purposes. In that way it corresponded to the policy of the USSR at the time, and the “alliance” of the Soviet regime and Nicholas Roerich in the mid-1920s grew out of that common interest. To Nicholas Roerich the substance of the religion was of greater importance, while the anti-British theme was incidental; to the Soviet regime, it was just the opposite.

However, when Roerich wanted to return to Kulu in October 1930, the British Government held up his visa-request on suspicion that the noted traveler was a “Red spy” – which suspicion arose partly from Nicholas Roerich’s visit to Moscow and the obvious Soviet support for the Central Asian Expedition. The British feared his support for the Indian freedom movement, and believed that Nicholas Roerich’s presence in northern India would work against British interests. In 1930, Roerich turned to Paris, and received permission without difficulty to go to Pondicherry, where he ostentatiously carried out archaeological excavation until December, when the British Government relented.

In February 1978 the Indian Minister of Foreign Affairs made an interesting statement in a speech in honor of the visiting Mongolian Minister of Foreign Affairs:

India and Mongolia are ancient lands of the ancient people of Asia. The history of cultural collaboration between India and Mongolia is most fascinating and unique and is as old as the history of the spread of Indian culture and ideas into Central Asia and Siberia. We in India consider the Mongolian veneration of Sanskrit a matter of special privilege. We hold the people of Mongolia in high esteem for preserving in translation as well as in manuscripts a vast collection of our precious Sanskrit texts on our philosophy, poetics, logic and astronomy lost by us over the centuries. This material is of unique value in the understanding of our ancient culture. . . . In modern times, too, many Mongolians visited India – the holy land of Buddhism. For instance . . . Agvan Dorjeev. . . .

Conclusion: 1978

In 1978 the lines of power run clearly Moscow-Ulan Bator and Peking-Lhasa, with essentially no surviving Ulan Bator-Lhasa connection. Lamaism is so much weakened and so much subjected to Russian and Chinese political manipulation that it no

longer functions as a factor unifying Mongolia and Tibet. The Roerichs' attempt to bridge the Central Asian gap via the Lamaist idea of Shambhala and use of the Tibetan language failed utterly, nor did George Roerich succeed in re-establishing traditional Russian scholarship. The Sino-Soviet split and the neo-Stalinist development of the USSR frustrated hopes for a new Eurasian geopolitical unity and for domestic Russian liberalization.

The Communist regimes in China and Russia have been constrained from total suppression and elimination of Buddhism by consideration of hoped-for influence with Third World Buddhist countries. But sufficient genuine indigenous religious sentiment survives so that official countenance of and support for a constricted and "puppet" religion frustrates the regimes' ultimate goal of complete withering-away of Buddhism.

But any idea that, "subtle pressure will build up to burst the Party's grip," and that there will come, "a recrudescence of 'spontaneous religiosity' which will be all the stronger for the years it has been kept down"⁸⁴ underestimates the sublimation of religious impulse and Buddhist tradition which has resulted from substitution and diminution accomplished by totalitarian political control. Substitution includes secular education, enlarged career opportunities, more general and more efficacious medical care, military service and public service, machinery and science, astronomy and realism, and surrogate ceremony.

Diminution results from indoctrination, control, and selective employment of duress. Constraints on the kind of fantasy and imagination so beautifully, and romantically, described by Holmes Welch in his comparison of Chinese Communism's National Day and the traditional Festival of the Hungry Ghosts, certainly impoverish the human spirit. But what is there in Twentieth Century experience to assure us that everything will turn out for the best in the end? On a more mundane and factual plane, what remains of Buddhism is very limited: a couple of functioning monasteries, a very small number of lamas, a superficial esthetic "restoration of historical monuments." Serious religiosity meets ruthless suppression.

The current shift in China away from radical Maoism already shows signs of some tolerance for religious expression, so that a limited Church carefully restricted and manipulated by Peking (cf. the Church in the MPR and USSR and the restriction and manipulation by Moscow there) may result. Education and indoctrination will continue to discourage religious training and practical career considerations will be shaped so as to discourage religious practice, but a Communist-controlled synthetic showplace kind of Buddhism will probably be permitted. Participation in "World Buddhist" meetings and Buddhist-based appeals to other Buddhist countries will probably be encouraged, and tame Buddhists from China will vie with tame Buddhists from the MPR and USSR for influence in authentically Buddhist countries. The use of Buddhism for influence abroad will work against the hope for complete withering away of the Church, but no dramatic religious renaissance is likely to occur.

Notes

- 1 Sir Charles Bell noted in 1924: "Political necessity may cause Mongolia to cling to this nation or to that, but her natural affinity is with Tibet, In race the two people are closely akin: you can hardly tell one from the other until they speak. In religion they are one." *Tibet. Past and Present* (1924), p. 225.

- 2 Robert Craft, *Conversations with Igor Stravinsky* (1959), pp. 105–106.
- 3 See Richard J. Watton, *Henry Wallace, Harry Truman, and the Cold War* (1976).
- 4 The symbolism and esoteric significance of the reverse side of the Great Seal of the United States includes several aspects: the unfinished pyramid conveys the idea of strength and duration on which the future will build: the thirteen layers of stone are, of course, the thirteen colonies. “The eye,” runs one explanation, “alludes to the many and signal interpositions of Providence in favor of the American cause.” It is an all-seeing eye of God, guarding and protecting the uncompleted pyramid. The triangle was added by Thomas Jefferson himself, and represents the Holy Trinity; it also means perfection. The sun’s rays around the triangle and eye also signify the Creator and in relation to the uncompleted pyramid indicate the Supreme Builder. Both Latin mottoes derive from Vergil. “Annuit Coeptis” means, “He has favored our undertakings,” and along with the eye and other symbols it declares divine favor and protection for the American experiment. “Novus Ordo Seclorum” is, “A new series of ages.” With the 1776 date at the base of the pyramid, the sense is that the birth of the United States is the birth of a new era for mankind, an era proceeding under the watchful observation of God. There is an underlying general suggestion of a Second Coming.
- 5 Yu. N. Rerikh [George Roerich], “Mongolo-Tibetskie otnoshenii v XIII i XIV vv.,” *Sbornik, Filologiya i Istoriya Mongol’skikh Narodov* (Moscow 1958), pp. 333–346; “Mongolo-Tibetskie otnoshenii v XVI i nachalo XVII vv.,” *Mongol’skii Sbornik* (1959), pp. 188–199.
- 6 Donald Rayfield, *The Dream of Lhasa: The Life of Nikolay Przhevalsky (1839–1888), Explorer of Central Asia* (Ohio U. Press 1976), pp. 52–53.
- 7 Andrew Malozemoff, *Russian Far Eastern Policy, 1881–1904* (U. California 1958), p. 163.
- 8 For information about Gomojab Tsybikov (1873–1932), see R. A. Rupen, *Mongols of the Twentieth Century*, v. 1 (1964), pp. 12, 14, 25 n44, 34, 44–45, 108–09, 129. Note M. I. Vorob’eva-Desyatovskaya, “Sobranie tibetskikh ksilogragov iz kolleksii G. Ts. Tsybikova,” *Kratkie Soobshchenie Instituta Narodov Azii*, v. LXII, “Sbornik pamyati Yu. N. Rerikha” (1961), pp. 137–142.
- 9 Sir Francis Younghusband, *India and Tibet* (1910), p. 82. For reactions to Dorjeev in northern India in 1903, see Gordon Enders and Edward Anthony, *Nowhere Else in the World* (NY 1935), pp. 9–11, 20, 24, 40, 55, 87–89, 92 130. Note also, Alastair Lamb, *Britain and Central Asia: The Road to Lhasa 1787 to 1905* (London 1960), pp. 314–317.
- 10 About Petr Kuzmich Kozlov (1862–1935), see Rupen, v. 1, pp. 73, 78, 107–108. For Fedor Ippolitovich Shcherbalskoi (1866–1942), pp. 16, 38, 109, 113 n29, 287; Nikolai Yer moshkin, *Buddhism and Buddhists in the USSR* (Moscow, c.1965), pp. 34–38; Aleksei Nikolaevich Kochetov, *Lamaizm* (1973), pp. 74–75; Sofiya Davidovna Miliband, *Biobibliograficheskii Slovar’ Sovet-shikh Vostokovedov* (1975), pp. 621–622. For Badzar Badzarevich Baradin (1878–1937), see Rupen, v. 1, pp. 38–39 and numerous other references indexed p. 488.
For the Dalai Lama, the Panchen Lama, and the Jebtsun Damba Khutukhtu as the “Holy Trinity.” See Enders and Anthony, pp. 10, 13, 183, 338 n3.
- 11 Younghusband, pp. 372–376. For Sando in Urga, see Rupen, v. 1, pp. 11, 60, 93 n34.
- 12 Gerard M. Friters, *Outer Mongolia and its international Position* (Baltimore 1949), p. 71.
While the Younghusband occupation of Lhasa in 1904 and Russia’s defeat by Japan in 1905 had considerably weakened Agvan Dorjeev’s position as adviser to the Dalai Lama and turned Russia’s interest away from Tibet, Agvan Dorjeev continued to influence Tsar Nicholas. Dorjeev was a key figure inspiring the construction of a Tibetan temple in St. Petersburg in 1909–1913, and that building has been symbolic for Russian-Tibetan and Russian-Buddhist relations ever since. Nicholas Roerich was a member of the committee which organized collection of funds and supervised construction.
- 13 Younghusband, p. 420; Friters, pp. 59, 66.
- 14 Amur Sanan, “The Importance of Buddhist Mongolia to the World Revolution” (originally published in Russian in 1919), in Eudin and North, *Soviet Russia and the East* (1957), p. 199.
- 15 L. E. Berlin, “Khambo-Agvan Dorzhiev (k bor’be Tibeta za nezavisimost’),” *Novyi Vostok*, No. 3 (1923), pp. 139–156. Stalin told the Twelfth Party Congress in 1923: “All we have to do is to make one small mistake in relation to the small territory of the Kalmuks, who have

ties with Tibet and China, and that will affect our work in a far worse way than mistakes in regard to the Ukraine." Alexander Nekrich, *The Punished Peoples* (1978), p. 99.

Concerning Agvan Dorjeev's assistant, Tserempil, see Rupen, v. 1. pp. 209–210.

- 16 Nicholas Roerich, *Altai-Himalaya* (1929), p. 369.
- 17 George Roerich's 1959 report on the expedition to the USSR Geographical Society was published as, 'Ekspeditsiya ak-a N. K. Rerikha v tsentral'nyu Aziyu (1925–1928),' *Voprosy Geografii*, No. 50 (1960), pp. 257–262.
- 18 Sir Charles Bell, *Portrait of the Dalai Lama* (1946), p. 380.
- 19 See, e.g. Nicholas Poppe, "Mongolovedenie v SSSR," *Vestnik Instituta po Izucheniyu Istorii i Kul'tury SSSR*, No. 1(14), (Munich 1955), pp. 25–43.
- 20 Enders and Anthony, p. 255.
- 21 Wallace Papers. Deposited at the University of Iowa library; Microfilm; detailed index in two volumes. *The Wallace Papers*. The reels for the correspondence of 1934, 1935, and early 1936 were the principal ones containing information dealing with the Roerich relationship.
- 22 Wallace Papers, correspondence of July 20, 1934.
- 23 Rupen, v. 1, p. 228.
- 24 G. D. R. Phillips, *Dawn in Siberia: The Mongols of Lake Baikal* (London 1942), p. 168.
For the atmosphere of spying in Central Asia, see Enders and Anthony, pp. 36–38, 136–143, 180–181, 228–229. For the Ataman Semenov, the Dilowa Khutukhtu, and an interesting version of the activities of von Ungern-Sternberg, pp. 182–196: 220–221.
It is often reported that Sandra Chandra Das was a British spy (see Younghusband, p. 319, and Lamb, pp. 152–153); Agvan Dorjeev a Russian spy (note 9 above); and Kawaguchi a Japanese spy (Lamb, pp. 314–315).
- 25 Wallace Papers, correspondence of August 24, 1935.
- 26 Wallace Papers. Especially MacMillan to Ryerson, June 9, 1934.
- 27 Vadim Borisovich Kassis, *Vosom'desyat Dnei v Tibete* (Moscow 1956); M. Domogatskikh, "Utro Tibeta," *Pravda Buryatii*, January 10, 1960. There does not seem to have been Russian scholarly inquiry in Tibet comparable to the geographer Murzaev's expedition in Sinkiang 1956–1959; Sushanio's work with China's Dungsans about that same time; or Todaeva's work with Inner Mongols, 1954–1957. (See note 76 below.)
However, Aleksandr Mikhailovich Reshetov studied in China 1957–1960, and published an article dealing with anthropological evidence found in 1960 at Lin-chih, 150 miles east of Lhasa. "Novye antropologicheskie materialy iz Tibeta" (Nakhodki v Lin'chzhi 1960 g.), *Voprosy Antropologii*, No. 18 (1964), pp. 150–156. See Miliband, p. 472.
- 28 President Franklin Roosevelt sent Vice President Henry Wallace to Asia in 1944, and, wrote Wallace, "He wanted me . . . to observe how they [the local populations] lived on both sides of the boundary and to form some opinion as to how possible future causes of conflict between China and Russia might be minimized." A chapter in Wallace's book is titled, "Sino-Soviet Frontier, War or Peace?" Owen Lattimore, John Hazard, and John Carter Vincent accompanied the Vice President on the trip. See Henry Wallace, *Soviet Asia Mission* (1946).
Lattimore wrote several articles in 1952 and 1953 about the geopolitical shift implied in the Communist victory in China and resulting Sino-Soviet cooperation.
- 29 George Roerich observed of Jamtsarano that, "in his deep knowledge he possesses a singular gift of unfolding the ancient sacred lore of Mongolia and Tibet," and the Buryat Mongol accompanied the Roerich caravan some distance out of Urga when it departed in April 1927. George Roerich *Trails to Inmost Asia* (1931), pp. 151, 178.
See also, Rupen, "First International Congress of Mongolian Philologists, Ulan Bator, September 1–8, 1959," *Journal of Asian Studies*, v. 19, No. 2 (Feb 1960), pp. 236–237.
- 30 Soviet reports say George Roerich was stricken by a fatal heart attack May 21, 1960. When I met him in Ulan Bator in September 1959, he appeared healthy and vigorous; his father, mother and brother lived well into their seventies (George was 58 when he died), He was perhaps already aware of the strong attack an Buddhism which would appear in June 1960 in *Nauka i Religiya*, by A. N. Kochetov, and discussed in Holmes Welch, *Buddhism Under Mao* (1972), pp. 293 and 598 n99. See also, Alexander Piatigorsky, "The Departure of Dandaron," *Kontinent 2* (1977), p. 173.

- Cf. Holmes Welch's discussion about Chao P'u-ch'u: "My guess is that his hospitalization with heart trouble in 1966 at the age of 58 was caused by worry and internal conflict." (p. 338.) But Chao P'u-ch'u still lives; *Soka Gakkai News* (Tokyo, Oct. 1. 1978), quotes him as telling the Japanese visitors. "We went through very painful and hard times in the past."
- 31 *Onen* (Ulan Bator. Aug. 19. 1958); *Sovremennaya Mongoliya*, No. 10(23), (Oct. 1959), pp. 26–27; *Problemy Vostokovedeniya*, No. 2 (1960).
- 32 R. W. Lee III, "General Aspects of Chinese Communist Religious Policy, with Soviet Comparisons," *China Quarterly*, No. 19 (July-Sept. 1964), pp. 161–173; Holmes Welch's discussion, pp. 292–293; 598 n99.
- 33 Holmes Welch, pp. 367, 628/51, and 629/55. Rinchen compared the ravages of Mao and the Cultural Revolution to those of Stalin and the purges in, "Sanskrit in Mongolia," *Studies in Indo-Asian Art and Culture*, v. 3 (New Delhi 1974).
- 34 Additional material by and about the Roerichs.
 Nicholas Roerich, *Shambhala – The Resplendent* (1930); "Parapsychology" (1937).
About Nicholas Roerich:
 Igor Stravinsky – Nicholas Roerich correspondence, June 1910 – December 1912, in: *The Rite of Spring. Sketches 1911–1913* (1969).
 Nina Selivanova. *World of Roerich* (1925).
Christian Science Monitor (June 25, 1934).
 Teh Wang letter about n.r., *North China Star* (Tientsin, Sept. 21, 1935). *Washington News* (Jan. 30, 1936).
 "The 'Guru letters': Wallace meets the Roerich Cultists," *Newsweek* (March 22, 1948), pp. 27–29.
 Westbrook Pegler. *New York Journal-American* (March 1948; October 22. 1948).
 Sergei Makovsky, "Kto byl Rerikh?"; "Eshche o Rerikhe," *Russkaya Mysl'* (Paris 1956).
 N. Dmitrievna, *Rerikh* (1958).
 Zaritskaya and Trofimov, *Mezhdunarodnaya Zhizn'* (1965). [Account of N.R.'s visit to Soviet representative in Berlin, Dec. 1924.]
 A. Alekhin, "Grafika N. K. Rerikha," *Uchenye Zapiski Moskovskogo Gos.-ogo Ped.-ogo In-ta*, No-263 (1968).
 P. Belikov, "Rerikh i Gor'kii," *Uchenye Zapiski Tartuskogo Gos.-ogo In-ta*, No. 217 (1968) Including, "Bibliografiya proizvedenii N. K. Rerikha."
 V. Knyazeva, *Rerikh* (1968).
 Pavel Fedorovich Belikov and Valentina Pavlovna Knyazeva, *Rerikh* (1972). 150,000 copies.
 Elena Ivanovna Polyakova, *Nikolai Rerikh* (1973). 50,000 copies.
 A. D. Alekhin, "N. K. Rerikh (k 100-letiyu so dnya rozhdeniya)," *Znanie*, No. 6 (1974). 200,000 copies.
 P. F. Belikov and L. V. Shaposhnikova, "Institut 'Urusvati' (nauchnaya deyatel'nosti N. K. Rerikha i u. N. Rerikha v Indii)," *Strany i Narody Vostoka*, v. XIX (India, Book 4), (1977), pp. 250–270. [Reporting visit to Urusvati, India. spring 1972.]
 George Roerich, *Tibetskii Yazyk* (1961).
About George Roerich:
Narody Azii i Atriki, No. 4 (1962), pp. 247, 252.
BSE, vol. 22 (1975), p. 431.
 Miliband, pp. 471–472.
- 35 Nicholas Roerich, *Altai-Himalaya*, p. 287; also note story about Communist atheistic propaganda and a Muslim reaction, p. 189. George Roerich repeats a bizarre Tibetan version of the 1917 Revolution and the role of Lenin; *Trails*, p. 389.
 In 1919 or 1920, representatives of the so-called "Proletkul't" destroyed the frescoes Nicholas Roerich had painted in the Kazan railroad station.
- 36 Robert Craft notes. "Stravinsky confided his prefiguration of the new ballet to Nicholas Roerich, painter, ethnographer, archaeologist, designer of Rimsky-Korsakov's tomb, and it was one of the most fortunate confidences of his life, for Roerich's knowledge . . . inspired Stravinsky and helped to sustain his vision. Roerich's was the catalyst of the subject." Preface to Stravinsky, *The Rite of Spring, Sketches 1911–1913* (1969), p. xvii.

- Another view of Roerich in the early years is presented by Franz Meyer. *Marc Chagall* (NY 1963), p. 52: "Soon after Chagall entered [the Imperial Society for the Protection of the Arts], the painter Nicholas Roerich was appointed director. His highly stylized and literary painting had no influence on Chagall, although he was an open-minded man who did all he could to help his pupil and left him complete artistic liberty. He also managed to have Chagall's call-up postponed and later to have his liability for military service canceled entirely. Roerich, who is best known as a designer of stage sets for Dighilev, wrote long poems and books on history and archaeology, which he used to read to his pupils, not always to the latter's amusement."
- 37 Diary-excerpts in *Nash Sovremennik*, No. 7 (July 1967), pp. 103–114, include reference to the "Pro-Russian" article of 1924, and articles on the Great Russian People and the Red Flag (June and December 1940) also appear there. 1941 articles on "Defense of the Fatherland" in *Oktyabr'*, No. 10 (1958), pp. 228–229. Issue No. 1 (1933) of Roerich's *Urusvati Journal* was dedicated to Sven Hedin.
- 38 Wallace Papers: Nicholas Roerich to Henry Wallace, March 20, 1934. *Roerich Museum: A Decade of Activity 1921–1931* (1931), p. 14.
- 39 *Time*, v 50 (Dec. 29, 1947), pp. 21–22.
- 40 "The Roerich Pact," *Bulletin of the Pan-American Union*, v. 69. No. 5 (May 1935).
- 40a *Newsweek* (March 22, 1948), p. 27.
- 41 Thomas Babington Macaulay, "Minute on Indian Education [Feb. 2, 1835]," *Selected Writings* (1972), pp. 235–252.
- 42 Younghusband, pp. 310, 314–315; Holmes Welch, p. 167; Rayfield, {p. 49}. Nicholas Roerich noted in Sinkiang: "places like Khotan have exhausted their old sap and can be rejuvenated only by a radical reconstruction . . . Life has become dusty and brains have become dusty. A flash of vigorous lightning is needed." *Altai-Himalaya*, pp. 194–195.
- 43 Colin Wilson, *The Occult* (1971); Natalie Rokotoff, *Foundations of Buddhism* (1930), pp. 107, 110–111; "Getting Serious About the Occult," *Atlantic* (Oct. 1978). See note 57 below.
- 44 Edward Conze, *Buddhism: Its Essence and Development* (originally published 1951: 1975 paperback), pp. 211–212; Colin Wilson.
- 45 E. F. Knight, *Where Three Empires Meet: A Narrative of Recent Travel in Kashmir, Western Tibet, Gilgit, and the Adjoining Countries* (London 1897), pp. 131–132.
- 46 "After his journeys through India, Central Asia, China, Europe, and America. George Roerich – the son of the famous painter, an exceptional Buddhologist, and a man of formidable erudition about Tibet and Mongolia – returned to Russia. . . . All at once Buddhism got under way again as never before, or rather as it once had been." Piatigorsky, p. 177. Cf. Yermoshkin, p. 38.
- 47 Rupen, "The Buryat intelligentsia," *Far Eastern Quarterly*, V. 15, No. 3 (May 1956), pp. 383–398.
- 48 Macaulay, p. 249.
- 49 George Roerich, "Studies in the Kalacakra," *Urusvati Journal*, V. 11 (1932), reprinted in *Izbrannye Trudy* (1967), pp. 153–164. See also George Roerich, "The Epic of King Kesar of Ling," *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society of Bengal*, 8 (1942), reprinted in *Izbrannye Trudy*, pp. 181–215.
- 50 *Foundations of Buddhism*, p. 133. See also, Elena Ivanovna Polyakova, *Nikolai Rerikh* (1973), pp. 234–237, 252; Kochetov, *Lamaizm*, pp. 122f, 129–131; Chogyam Trungpa, *Born in Tibet* (Shambhala Press, Boulder, Colo., 1977), pp. 179–180.
- 51 Kawaguchi Ekai, *Three Years in Tibet* (1909). About Kawaguchi as a Japanese spy, see Enders and Anthony, pp. 21, 133–134, Younghusband, p. 320.
- A Kalmyk lama of the Don Cossacks similarly presented Russia as Shambhala and the Tsar as savior: Dambo Ul'yanov, *Predskazanie Buddy o Dome Romanovykh i Kratkii Ocherk Novykh Puteshestvii v Tibet v 1904–1905 gg.* (St Petersburg 1913). See Kochetov, *Lamaizm*, p. 170, and Albert Grünwedel, "Der Weg nach Shambhala," *Abhandlungen der Königlich Bayerischen Akademie der Wissenschaften*, v. III. pt. 3 (Munich 1915).
- 52 Younghusband, p. 319, reported that Queen Victoria was considered the earthly form of the goddess of the Jo-kang temple in Lhasa, and Enders and Anthony, p. 360, stated: "When the first Indian rupees bearing Queen Victoria's head made their appearance in Tibet, popular

- opinion canonized this picture as a representation of the White Tara, and eventually the belief that Victoria was the reincarnation of Tsongkapa's queen became a regular feature of Lamaism." Holmes Welch, p. 291, indicated, "There were occasional attempts to identify Mao with a Buddhist divinity."
- 53 *Foundations of Buddhism*, p. 137; *Altai-Himalaya*, p. 168.
- 54 Unkrig, quoted in Rupen, v. 1 p. 106. G. D. R. Phillips, *Dawn in Siberia: The Mongols of Lake Baikal* (London 1942), p. 168.
- 55 I. P. Minayeff, *Recherches Sur le Bouddhisme* (Paris 1894), pp. ii–iv.
- 56 Arthur M. Schlesinger, Jr., *The Coming of the New Deal* (1958), pp. 29–34.
- 57 Blavatsky, *The Veil of Isis*, v. 1 (1886), pp. 599–603. Blavatsky always claimed to receive messages from "Tibetan Mahatmas" and Gurjiev (1873–1949) reportedly embarked on an uncompleted caravan-journey to the Gobi Desert, seeking a "hidden city." The "Occult and Bizarre Issue" of *The Drama Review* (June 1978) includes much material dealing with Gurjiev.
- See also, "Getting Serious about the Occult," *Atlantic* (October 1978). A significant chapter by Mircea Eliade, "The Occult and the Modern World" appears in, *Occultism, Witchcraft, and Cultural Fashions* (1976), pp. 47–68. Eliade cites Rene Guénon as the most devastating critic of Blavatsky and Theosophy: *Le Theosophisme: Histoire d'une Pseudo-religion* (1921), Also see T.-Y. Dokan, "Le mysticisme tibétain," *Encyclopedia des Mystiques Orientales* (Paris 1975), pp. 141–167.
- 58 Rupen, v. 1, pp. 34–35; 49 n18.
- 59 Holmes Welch, pp. 291, 621 n5, 630 n56. For Buryat neo-Buddhism, see K. M. Gerasimova, *Obnovlencheskoe Dvizhenie Buryatskogo Lamaistskogo Dukhovenstva* (Ulan Ude 1964).
- 60 Quoted in Rupen, v. 1, p. 200.
- 61 Holmes Welch, pp. 297, 339.
- 62 Younghusband, pp. 316–317. James Cameron, *Mandarin Red* (1955) not entirely unfairly characterized Tibetan Buddhism as: "a religion which mingles most aspects of the Shamanist culture, Tantric mysticism, devil worship, pantheism and Indo-Tibetan demonolatry, tinged here and there with the teachings of the Buddha, and involving a really formidable pantheon of gods, saints, demons, and canonized evil spirits." (p. 74).
- See Guisepppe Tucci, "Die Religionen Tibets," (pp. 7–291), and Walther Heissig, "Die Religionen des Mongolen," (pp. 293–426), in *Die Religionen Tibets und der Mongolei* (Stuttgart 1970).
- 63 Macaulay, pp. 242–243; Conze, p. 68. The word "veterinarian" has been substituted for "Farrier" in the Macaulay quote.
- 64 *Foundations of Buddhism*, pp. 115–127. Cf. V. V. Ivanov, "Ob analogiyakh mezhdru buddiiskoi logikoi i noveishei evropeiskoi naukoi," *Trudy-in-ta Obshch, Nauk SO AN SSSR*, No. 1. Seriya vostokovedeniya. Materialy po istorii i filologii Tsentral noi Azii, No. 3 (Ulan Ude 1968), pp. 143–147.
- 65 Younghusband, p. 128; Rupen, V. 1, pp. 83–84.
- 66 William A. Brown and Urgunge Onon, editors and translators, *History of the Mongolian People's Republic* (1976), pp. 233, 233n 1, 236.
- 67 Holmes Welch, pp. 568 n18 and n19.
- 68 Holmes Welch, pp. 265, 598 n104.
- 69 Holmes Welch, p. 296. Welch also notes, "From 1952 through 1966 at least 36 foreign Buddhist delegations visited China and eleven Chinese Buddhist delegations went abroad." (p. 185.) Cf. Yermoshkin, pp. 20–27, for similar Soviet manipulation.
- 70 Sh. Sandag, "O zabluzhdeniyakh i trezvykh myslakh odnogo amerikanskogo uchenogo", *Sovromennaya Mongoliya* (Ulan Bator, August 1959), pp. 45–47.
- 71 *Roerich Museum – A Decade of Activity, 1921–1931* (NY 1931): "Particular attention will be paid to Tibetan pharmacopeia, and it is planned to publish translations with adequate commentaries from Tibetan medical works. . . . At present a careful research in the Tibetan medical literature is being made by Dr. George Roerich. . . . It is known that the Tibetan pharmacology has in its possession remedies against cancer and tuberculosis known to be highly successful. . . . The Himalayan Research Institute . . . will concentrate upon experimentation with new and local cures." (pp. 97–98).

- 72 A. N. Kochetov, *Lamaizm*, pp. 166–168; Rechung Rinpoche Jampal Kunzang, *Tibetan Medicine* (U. California Press, 1973), including European-languages bibliography, pp. 98–102; Rupen, V. 11 (Bibliography), Numbers 62, 132–34, 138, 139, 2364b; E. E. Obermiller, “Puti izucheniya tibetskoi meditsinskoi literatury,” *Bibliografiya Vostoka*, No. 8–9 (Leningrad 1935), pp. 48–60; G. Sedlachek and B. V. Semichov, *Slovar Tibetsko-Latino-Russkikh Nazanii Lekarstvennogo Rastitel'nogo Syr'ya, Primenyaemogo v Tibetsko Meditsine* (Ulan Ude 1963).
- 73 Kochetov. p. 166.
- 74 “The bulk of Tibetan loan-words . . . belongs . . . to the second half of the XVIII and XIXth centuries which coincided with the spread of monkhood in Mongolia . . . when Mongol monks in ever increasing numbers entered Tibetan monasteries for study . . . with the spread of the knowledge of the Tibetan language, single words and even whole expressions . . . became incorporated into Mongolian, to such an extent that a person knowing spoken Mongolian will find it difficult to understand his interlocutor speaking the monastic jargon loaded with Tibetan loan-words. A sentence can entirely consist of Tibetan words furnished with Mongolian declensional and verbal suffixes. . . . This jargon must have originated among Mongol monks resident in Tibet, and then spread slowly throughout the Mongol monasteries. . . . In recent years with the development of new National language based on the spoken idiom, the number of Tibetan loan-words began to decrease.” George Roerich, “Tibetan loan-words in Mongolian.” *Sino-Indian Studies*, v, V, Nos. 3–4. reprinted in *Izbrannye Trudy* (1967), pp. 249–250.
See also, “Tibetizmy,” in, Ts. B. Tsydendambaev, *Buryatskie Istoricheskie Khroniki i Rodoslovnye* (Ulan Ude 1972), pp. 496–513.
- 75 Quoted in Rupen, v. 1, pp. 229–230. In addition to the forced phasing-out of the use of the Tibetan language in the MPR, the Russian language has totally displaced Chinese as second language there. Then the imposed Cyrillic replaced the traditional vertical script for the Mongolian language in the MPR, while traditional Tibetan continued unchanged in China. Plans call for romanization of minority-scripts in China, while all have been shifted to Cyrillic in the USSR. The total impact means erection of a substantial barrier which blocks communications between Mongols and Tibetans.
- 76 E. M. Murzaev, *Prirode Sin'tszyana i Formirovanie Pustyn' Tsentral'noi Azii* (1966); M. Sushanlo, *Dungane-Istoriko-etnograficheskii ocherk* (Frunze 1971); B. Kh. Todaeva, *Mongol'skie Yazyki i Dialekty Kitaya* (Moscow 1960.) See note 27 above.
- 77 Rinchen was attacked in the press and ignored when he died; Dandaron was arrested and died in a camp; Piatigorsky left the USSR. The Leningrad temple was never converted to scholarly purposes as planned.
- 78 Yermoshkin, pp. 321–322; Rupen, v. 1, pp. 111, 113 n37. For Sanskrit and Indian studies, see, George Roerich, “Indology in Russia,” *Journal of the Greater India Society*, v. XII, No. 2 (Calcutta 1945), pp. 69–98 (also in, *K. Nag-Greater India* (Bombay 1960), pp. 347–373); Rinchen, “Sanskrit in Mongolia,” (1974); V. I. Kal'yanov, “Izuchenie sanskrita v Rossii,” *Uchenye Zapiski LGU*, No. 304. Seriya vostokovedch, nauk, No. 14. *Istoriya stran Vostoka* (1962), pp. 140–167.
Miliband supplies an alphabetical list of Soviet specialists holding advanced degrees and working in Oriental studies. For Buddhism, Tibet, and Sanskrit, the names of the younger ones (all born in the 1930s) include: B. A. Bogoslovskii, B. M. Bongard-Levin, M. I. Vorob'eva-Desyatovskaya, I. S. Gurevich, A. N. Zelinskii, B. I. Kuznetsov. Yu. M. Pavlov, A. M. Reshetov, and A. Ya. Syrkin.
- 79 In the MPR, Sh. Bira's work is available in English translation: *Mongolian Historical Literature of the XVII–XIX Centuries Written in Tibetan*, translated by Stanley Frye and edited by John Krueger (Bloomington, Ind., 1970). A Soviet historical work on Tibet appeared in 1977: Aleksandr Stepanovich Martynov, *Status Tibeta v XVII–XVIII Vekakh v Traditsionnoi Kitaiskoi Sisteme Politicheskikh Predstavlenii* (published in 1650 copies.). In 1978, Bogoslovskii published, *Tibetskii Raion KNR* (3750 copies).
- 80 This was particularly apt to apply to the outlying provinces. Nicholas Roerich was totally disillusioned about Sinkiang: “I would be happy to speak of China in terms of praise, but the entire Sinkiang Province . . . did not permit any avenue for favorable conclusions . . .

I am writing with sorrow for the Chinese. I can imagine how the best Chinese will blush for such contemporaries!" And his concluding words about China after the terrible Sinkiang experience:

For the last time, I turn toward China. On my painting which is in Peking there is an inscription: "The Friend of China." Did my friendship lessen after seeing the whole Dance of Death of Sinkiang? Not in the least. It is my friendship to real China that has given me the right to record so many horrors. A hypocritical enemy would close his eyes at this horror of reality but a friend must point out whatever assails an unprejudiced eye. In the lancing of these ulcers lies the assurance of the success of future China. Out of the past, out of the ancient civilization of China, one can construct a bridge only to the future new consciousness, with understanding of the true evolution. But the present will sink into the darkness as a stained page of history. The governors and ambans of contemporary China will become horrible masks in the curio-museum, as little needed for humanity as the amputation of the hands and feet of the god of water [which he had described earlier]. I sincerely hope that China may soon cast off all degradation and wash away the dirt which has accumulated under the silk of the outer garments: I wish success to all who understand the terror of hypocrisy and ignorance. *Altai-Himalaya*, pp. 163, 284, 293-295. 325.

81 See Friters, pp. 210-212; U.S. pressure re Yalta, e.g., Rupen, v. 1. p. 251.

82 Nicholas Roerich along with many others considered the Panchen Lama as a spiritual and truly religious leader far superior to the corrupt Dalai Lama (*Altai-Himalaya*, pp. 116-118). But the Panchen Lama fled Tibet in 1923 and never returned. He was thus much closer to the Chinese, and was seen by many as their political tool. When the Panchen Lama died in 1937, the Chinese (not the Tibetans) manipulated the succession, which clouded the legitimacy of the present Panchen Lama. The Chinese Army delivered the young Panchen to Shigatse in 1952, and moved him to Lhasa after the Dalai Lama fled in 1959. But he was removed from his position of nominal power when he refused to denounce the Dalai Lama in 1964. He has recently more or less returned to grace, and in 1978 the Dalai Lama at Dharmasala (India) was very careful not to malign the Panchen Lama in any way.

Enders, particularly, always presents the Panchen Lama as more important than the Dalai Lama. Enders and Anthony, pp. 89-92, 94-96, 116, 130-131, 292-294.

83 *Far Eastern Economic Review* (June 9, 1978).

84 Holmes Welch, pp. 385-86.

CHRISTIAN MISSIONS AND THE POLITICS OF TIBET, 1850–1950

John Bray

Source: W. Wagner (ed.), *Kolonien und Missionen*, Bremen: Universität Bremen: Bremer Asien-Pazifik Studien, 1993, pp. 180–95.

The second half of the nineteenth century saw a dramatic growth of Christian missionary activity in India and China, and at the time many anticipated a further expansion into Tibet. French Catholics, German Moravians, Scottish Presbyterians, and assorted English, American and Scandinavian evangelicals founded a string of mission stations on the Tibetan borders in preparation for the day when Tibet would open up. By the turn of the century the British missionary William Carey was able to write of Tibet in almost military terms:

This apparently impregnable Gibraltar of modern missions is now invested on all sides but one, and the siege is being prosecuted with vigour by several societies, working independently of one another, but directed by a common aim and all cheered by the not distant hope of scaling the impenetrable walls and gaining the confidence of the people.¹

Carey's prediction proved premature. The various churches working on the Tibetan borders translated the Bible into Tibetan; distributed tracts; ran schools, orphanages, hospitals and farms; and, although this was not their main purpose, collected a wealth of ethnographic information. However, they made few converts from among Tibetan Buddhists, and political obstacles meant that Tibet itself remained firmly closed.

This paper is a preliminary study of the various Tibet missions and the political environment in which they operated between 1850 and 1950. It draws on my previous research on Moravian missions in the western Himalaya and on the initial findings of a comparative study of Protestant and Roman Catholic missions on Tibet's southern and eastern borders. This research is far from comprehensive – but nevertheless suggests certain common themes.

1. Tibet and its neighbours

Until 1950 Tibet's supreme ruler was the Dalai Lama who was believed to be an incarnation of Avalokitesvara, the bodhisattva of compassion. He presided over a

hierarchy of monk and lay officials. Some 26% of the male population were monks,² and monasteries played a key role as political and commercial centres as well as religious shrines.

All Tibetans respected the Dalai Lama as a religious leader, but his temporal authority was confined to an area in central Tibet roughly equivalent to the present boundaries of the Tibet Autonomous Region (TAR). Much of the eastern province of Kham and the whole of the north-eastern province of Amdo was controlled by the Chinese, though in practice the political situation was often confused in both areas. Similarly, the Himalayan kingdoms of Bhutan, Sikkim, and Ladakh were Buddhist, but politically separate from Tibet. Christian missions were able to operate in all these outlying areas except Bhutan.

The one characteristic that united the wider Tibetan region was Buddhism and the literary Tibetan (*chos skad*, the ‘language of the dharma’) that accompanied it. Even in these respects Tibet was not completely homogenous. The indigenous Bon religion, which had taken on many Buddhist characteristics, retained a substantial following; and there were influential Muslim communities in Lhasa, Ladakh and parts of the north-east. Nevertheless, it was taken for granted that true Tibetans were Buddhists. The traditional Tibetan word for Buddhist is *nang pa* – ‘insider’. Practitioners of Bon and Muslims – let alone Christians – were automatically considered to be *phyi pa* – ‘outsiders’. Tibetans honoured the religious leaders of other faiths, as long as they did not try to make converts. Roman Catholic missionaries who tried to do so in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries fell foul of the authorities.³

Conservative monastic leaders justified their country’s tendency towards isolationism by claiming that it helped protect their religious heritage. The Tibetans’ own view of their place in the world is aptly summarised in a letter sent by the Tibetan Foreign Bureau to Chinese President Chiang Kai-shek in 1946:

There are many great nations on this earth who have achieved unprecedented wealth and might, but there is only one nation which is dedicated to the well-being of humanity in the world, and that is the religious land of Tibet which cherishes a joint spiritual and temporal realm.⁴

Buddhism came to Tibet from India, and the most revered scriptures were translated from Sanskrit. However, Tibet’s closest political relations were with China. In the seventeenth century the Fifth Dalai Lama established a special ‘priest/patron’ relationship with the Chinese emperor.⁵ Two Chinese Ambans, supported by a military garrison, were stationed in Lhasa from 1728 until the Chinese revolution of 1911, and this allowed Peking to claim a nominal political authority over Tibet. However, China’s influence on Lhasa’s internal affairs was always tenuous, and the Dalai Lama’s government operated with complete defacto independence from the Chinese revolution in 1911 until the invasion of the People’s Liberation Army (PLA) in 1950.

In the nineteenth century British policy-makers tended to accept China’s claim to authority over Tibet at face value. When a dispute arose over Sikkim’s northern boundary, the British initially tried to solve the problem by appealing to Peking. However, it gradually emerged that the Chinese had little capacity to enforce agreements on Tibet. The British authorities then tried to open direct relations with Lhasa – at first through diplomacy and then by force. They felt it all the more necessary to do

so because they believed that Russia was trying to extend its influence in Tibet. The result was the 1903/1904 British military expedition to Tibet led by Col Francis Younghusband, and the signing of the 1904 Lhasa Convention which established political and commercial relations between Britain and Tibet.

From 1904 until Indian independence in 1947, the British dealt directly with the Lhasa government while acknowledging China's 'suzerainty' over Tibet. The aim of British foreign policy was to sustain Tibet's role as a buffer state without antagonising China by proclaiming Tibetan independence. The Government of India's objectives were therefore essentially conservative: to maintain the status quo inside Tibet in order to preserve the security of India's northern border.

This policy clashed directly with the aspirations of Christian missionaries who wished to work in Tibet. The British were afraid that the missionaries would antagonise the Lhasa authorities, thus jeopardising the future of Anglo-Tibetan relations – and possibly their own lives. They therefore discouraged missionaries from entering Tibet and by the 1920s this had become established Government of India policy. No one who was not an Indian or a Tibetan was allowed to cross the frontier into Tibet without a pass. In an internal discussion note of 1922, Government of India Foreign Secretary Sir Denys Bray proposed that passes should be given freely 'except to sportsmen, missionaries and undesirables'.⁶ However, he thought it inadvisable for the government formally to bar missionaries as a class – possibly because he feared criticism from British church leaders. He therefore suggested that the government should where appropriate consult Lhasa before refusing passes to certain 'undesirables' so that the Tibetans would carry their share of responsibility. The British would have preferred Lhasa to issue a formal statement banning missionaries, but the Tibetans never did so. In practice both sides found it convenient to blame the other for a policy they both accepted.

2. Missionaries on the Indo-Tibetan Borders

The Government of India's restrictions on missionaries did not apply within its own boundaries, and several churches worked among Tibetan Buddhist communities on the southern side of the Himalayas. The main missions working among Tibetan Buddhists in the British period were the Moravians in Ladakh; the Church of Scotland, the Scandinavian Alliance Mission and several independents in the Darjeeling area; the US-based Methodist Episcopal Church in Dharchula (near Nepal's western border); and French Roman Catholics near the border with Bhutan. This section concentrates on the Moravians and on the experiences of Tharchin, a catechist and later minister of the Church of Scotland.

Moravian missionaries in the western Himalayas

The first Moravians came to the western Himalayas in 1854 en route, as they then thought, to Mongolia.⁷ They tried to cross the border into Tibet three times. Having failed to do so, they founded a mission station in Kyelang (now more commonly known as Keylong) in Lahul in 1856. In 1865 they founded a second station in Poo, Kinnaur, and in 1884 Lord Ripon, the British Viceroy, persuaded the Maharaja of Kashmir to permit the establishment of a third station in Leh, Ladakh. The Moravians

selected Kyelang and Poo because they lay on the main trade and pilgrimage routes to Tibet, while Leh was a major trading centre. All three stations were intended as advance posts in preparation for the day when Tibet would be open to foreign missionaries.

The early Moravian missionaries were Germans, but they enjoyed good relations with the British authorities. The British government helped them find land in Kyelang, and entrusted them with the supervision of the local postal service and, for a time, the school. In 1864 A. W. Heyde acted as interpreter for P. H. Egerton, the district commissioner of Kangra, on a tour of Spiti. Heyde was able to combine his official duties with preaching to local villagers. Among his other objectives, Egerton was to explore the possibility of establishing a trade route from Punjab via Tibet to Xinjiang. The Tibetans refused to co-operate, but Heyde expressed the hope that future such initiatives would bear fruit: 'if once the country is opened to the merchant, it is so likewise to the missionary'.⁸

In the event the Moravians never came close to establishing a mission inside Tibet. They were allowed to travel as far as Shipke, the first village inside Tibet on the road from Poo, but no further. The reason given was that the villagers would be severely punished if they allowed any Westerners to proceed. In 1894 local Tibetans expressed the belief that the Europeans aimed first to take Tibet's religion – and then the country itself.⁹

In any case, lack of manpower was a severe problem for the missionaries from the 1890s onwards, and the ordination of the first Ladakhi ministers in 1921 provided no more than a partial solution. The Moravians were hard pressed to maintain and develop the work they had begun on the Indian side of the border, and practical considerations appear to have blunted their disappointment at Tibet's continued closure.

Nevertheless, they never quite lost a sense of being pioneers for the future evangelisation of Tibet. Perhaps their greatest contribution was in the field of Tibetan Christian literature.¹⁰ Heyde set up a printing press in Kyelang as early as 1859 and, like their Protestant counterparts in the east, the Moravians distributed Tibetan-language tracts liberally in the hope that these would reach Tibet proper. Meanwhile, Heinrich August Jaeschke worked on the translation of the Tibetan Bible. One of the by-products was his Tibetan-English Dictionary which was published at British government expense in 1881. The first version of the Tibetan New Testament came out in 1885, and the complete Bible in 1948.

The Moravians' headquarters was in Herrnhut, Germany, but the mission began employing British and Swiss nationals in India from the 1890s onwards. This proved especially fortunate at the outbreak of the First World War when the three German missionaries and their families were interned as enemy aliens and then repatriated: the presence of their non-German colleagues helped provide a degree of continuity.

Apart from this episode, British rule provided a favourable environment for the mission. Unlike their counterparts on Tibet's eastern borders, the Moravians were able to work without fear of being caught up in wars and rebellions, and they laid the foundations of a Ladakhi Christian community which still survives. However, with some 250 members, it is by far the smallest of Ladakh's religious groups.

One of the main reasons for its small size has been the intense social pressure put on would-be converts. In Poo and Kyelang – and at first in Leh – Christians were

believed to be ritually unclean and were not allowed to eat with Buddhists or enter their houses for fear that the *pha-lha* (household god) would object. Many would-be converts were in debt either to Buddhist landlords or to monasteries, and the Moravians felt it necessary to establish farms to provide work for local Christians in Poo and Kyelang. Leh was always more cosmopolitan, but even there one prominent Christian was poisoned – unsuccessfully – when he announced his conversion in 1934.¹¹ Christianity was widely seen as a foreign religion, and conversion as a betrayal.

Tharchin and the Church of Scotland

Church of Scotland missionaries first settled in the Darjeeling and Kalimpong districts in 1870.¹² From the beginning they worked among a variety of ethnic groups – especially Lepchas, Nepalis, Bodos and Mechi, all of whom proved more receptive than the Tibetans. However, Kalimpong lay on the main trade route from Lhasa to India, and the mission there was partly aimed at Tibetans. The most prominent members of the Kalimpong congregation included David MacDonald, a British official of half-Sikkimese, half-Scottish descent; and Tharchin who had been born in Poo in 1889 and brought up as Moravian before finding his way to Kalimpong in the 1920s. He was ordained a minister of the Church of Scotland in 1952.

Tharchin was well-known throughout the region because he edited a Tibetan-language newspaper, the *Tibet Mirror* from the 1920s to the 1970s. He visited Lhasa several times, and appears to have been well received by senior officials. For example, in September 1927 he wrote from Lhasa that he had spent a day with Tsarong, one of the Dalai Lama's ministers, who had said that 'Tibet may be civilised through your paper'.¹³ Tsarong had been one of the proponents of modernising reforms, notably the creation of an army trained on British lines. He was still a powerful figure although by this time his influence had declined. During the same visit to Lhasa, Tharchin had an audience with the Dalai Lama, and he too promised support for the paper. In a letter to Sir Charles Bell (Britain's former representative in Tibet) in 1937, Tharchin reports that the Tibetan government had sent Rs 100 to help his paper.¹⁴

In his letters to Sir Charles Bell, Tharchin emphasised his loyalty as a British subject and refers to occasions when he had helped by providing information or, on one occasion, by taking photographs of a group of Buryat Buddhists from the Soviet Union.¹⁵ Tharchin was evidently a useful source of intelligence to the British authorities. However, he is chiefly remarkable for the extent and breadth of his contacts. He was well-known as a Christian and openly discussed his religious beliefs in Lhasa: his experiences show that the prohibition on Christianity in Tibet was far from absolute.

3. Missionaries on the Sino-Tibetan borders

Tibet's eastern borders were unstable throughout the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Between the territories of the Dalai Lama and lowland China there were a string of small states which had strong links with both China and Tibet but operated with a fair degree of independence from either.¹⁶ However, China was gradually extending its influence, both by immigration and by conquest. From 1905 the Chinese general Chao Erh-feng launched a series of campaigns to extend Chinese authority over Kham, and soldiers under his command reached Lhasa in 1910. The 1911

Chinese revolution led to the collapse of Chao's campaign – and to his own execution. However, the boundary between Tibet and China remained a cause of dispute – and bloodshed – in the years that followed. In 1918 Eric Teichman, the British Consul from Tachienlu (later known as Kanding) mediated a temporary settlement – but this did not prevent further clashes in the 1920s and 1930s. Moreover, regardless of disputes between Tibet and China, the whole area was plagued by bandits.

The north-east Tibetan province of Amdo was governed first by a Chinese Amban based in Sining and then by a Muslim warlord. It suffered from its share of bandits, warlords and, by the 1930s, communist guerrillas.

The main missionary organisations to work in the eastern and north-eastern Tibetan border areas included: the Société des Missions Etrangères of Paris in Tachienlu and the areas to the west and south-west; the China Inland Mission (CIM) in Tachienlu and Batang; the Seventh Day Adventists in Tachienlu; the US-based Foreign Christian Mission (FCM), the World Evangelisation Crusade (WEC), the World Missionary Prayer League (WPML) and several independents in Batang. Another American society, the Christian & Military Alliance, worked in Amdo – as did the CIM and Dutch and German Catholics from the Steyler mission. This section focuses primarily on the French Catholics, and selected CIM missionaries in the Kham border areas.

French Catholics

In the 1840s the Pope transferred responsibility for Tibetan missionary work from the Capuchins, who had worked in Lhasa in the previous century, to the Société des Missions Etrangères of Paris. The Western powers were then increasing their influence in China, and the Vatican believed that this would make it possible to revive missionary work in Tibet.

The pioneer French missionary in eastern Tibet was Fr. C. Renou who travelled to Tachienlu and Batang in 1847. However, Chinese officials arrested him, arguing that his passport did not authorise him to travel in Tibet. Renou was indignant. He said that the Emperor of China and the King of France were friends: he himself was French and therefore also qualified as a friend of the Emperor.¹⁷ This was to no avail, and he was forced to return to Canton where the French authorities took up his case. They argued that China's status in Tibet was similar to its status in Cochin China or Korea – and that this did not give the Chinese authorities the right to arrest people in Tibet and send them back to China. The Chinese failed to answer this point to the satisfaction of the French.

In 1852 Renou made a second journey to Tibet and soon afterwards founded the first Catholic mission at Bonga, just inside the Tibetan border. However, in 1865 brigands descended on the Bonga mission station, destroyed its buildings, killed a priest as well as several baptism candidates and forced the survivors to withdraw to Chinese territory. The missionaries believed that the monks of the nearby Tsarong monastery were responsible for the destruction of Bonga. Both then and subsequently they identified the monasteries as their main enemies.

In the missionaries' analysis the monasteries depended on the credulity of the Buddhist faithful for their survival, and therefore could hardly fail to see the spread of Christianity as a threat to their existence. As in Ladakh, many villagers depended on the monasteries economically as well as spiritually, and the mission therefore felt

it necessary to establish their own farms to provide for their converts. There were further attacks on French mission stations in the course of the next 60 years – notably in 1873, 1887, 1900, 1905 and 1912. In each case the missionaries appealed to the Chinese authorities for restitution, arguing that the 1860 Treaty of Tientsin gave them the right to protection in Chinese territory. The French government supported these appeals.

In the long term the missionaries believed that European intervention offered the best hope for Christianity in Tibet. For example, in 1879 Fr August Desgodins wrote:

La persistance des Anglais et l'action de la Russie au nord sont des forces convergentes qui ne peuvent manquer d'ouvrir un jour les portes du Thibet au commerce et à la civilisation. Les missionnaires profiteront des circonstances arrivant à leur suite, ils pourront entrer enfin en lutte avec cette théocratie redoutable dont le centre est à L'Hassa.¹⁸

However, the Russians never came close to taking over Tibet, and the British were to prove less than co-operative.

From the, early years of the twentieth century the British authorities maintained consuls at Chengdu (the capital of Sichuan) and Tachienlu, and these local vantage points enabled them to form their own opinions of the Catholic missions. In 1920 R. H. Clive of the British Legation in Peking wrote to Lord Curzon, who was then Foreign Secretary, and described the pattern of events as follows:

The Chinese authorities in response to the reclamations of the Catholics give the latter grants of Tibetan lands: the Tibetans recover the country and expel the Catholics; the Catholics then apply and obtain promise of restitution from the Chinese authorities. For fifty years the Catholics have been working on the borders of Eastern Tibet under the protection of Chinese bayonets, have identified their interests with those of the Chinese, and have aroused the bitter hostility of the Tibetans. As the Chinese wave in eastern Tibet goes forward, the Catholics follow in its wake; as it recedes they retire; and they consequently found their hopes of entering Tibet proper on the eventual conquest of that country by the Chinese. . . .¹⁹

As Clive pointed out, the Catholics' hopes for a Chinese conquest of Tibet clashed with the British policy of maintaining Tibet as a buffer state under its existing religious and political leadership.

Eric Teichman, who had served in Kham in 1917 and 1918, gave a similar assessment of the Catholic missions in his *Travels of a Consular Officer in Eastern Tibet* (Cambridge, 1922). One of the younger French missionaries, Fr. Francis Goré, responded to Teichman's published criticisms in his own book on eastern Tibet in 1939.²⁰ He argued that the missionaries had suffered in the past because they had been caught up in wider political crises and not because they were 'anti-Tibetan'. The missionaries could hardly expect the monks to assist the evangelisation of Tibet, but the Catholics nonetheless now enjoyed good relations with many monasteries, particularly those who did not belong to the dominant Gelugpa school. Goré argued that British influence rather than Tibetan opposition was the main reason for Tibet remaining closed

to missionaries. As noted above, it was British policy to exclude missionaries from Tibet, and his accusation therefore has a degree of truth.

Goré writes of Tibet with insight and affection and on the basis of his book, there is no reason to accuse him of being ‘anti-Tibetan’. Nevertheless, one of the final episodes of the Roman Catholic mission’s history points to the enduring conflict of interests between lamas and missionaries. In 1945 Fr Maurice Tornay took over the mission in Yerkalo which, as a result of a boundary change in the 1930s, had come under the political authority of central Tibet. Tornay quickly found himself embroiled in a dispute with the local monasteries of Karma and Sogun.

Within a year he was expelled although, according to his biographer, the governor of Chamdo favoured the mission’s point of view.²¹ Tornay was determined not to abandon his congregation and eventually decided to appeal direct to the Lhasa government. In 1949 he set out for Lhasa in disguise and had travelled for 17 days inside Tibet when he was intercepted, arrested and forced to return. He was murdered as he was approaching the Chinese border, apparently on the orders of his enemies in Karma and Sogun. The mission always regarded Tornay as a martyr, and in May 1993 the Vatican formally approved his beatification – the first step towards recognising his sainthood.²²

Within a year of Tornay’s death the Chinese began their invasion of Tibet. In the summer of 1950 the communist armies passed through the mission’s area on their way to Lhasa. At first the missionaries were able to continue working, but in December 1950 they were all placed under house arrest. Just over a year later they were finally expelled from China to Hong Kong.

Protestant missions

The best known CIM missionaries in the Kham area included Theodor Sørensen from Norway, who was based in Tachienlu for most of the period from 1899 until 1922,²³ and the Australian James Huston Edgar who sailed to China in 1898 and first visited Batang in 1903.²⁴ Edgar was associated with Kham for the rest of his life, particularly the period from 1922 to 1936 when he and his wife were based in Tachienlu. A third prominent figure was Dr Albert Shelton of the Foreign Christian Mission (FCM) who first came to Tachienlu in 1904 and later established his base in Batang, where he set up a hospital, a school and an orphanage.²⁵

Dispatches from British consular officials in Chengdu and Tachienlu generally reported favourably on the activities of the Protestant missionaries who – among their other contributions – were an excellent source of intelligence. For example, in 1911 J. R. Muir of the CIM wrote a detailed account of political conditions along the road from Batang to Derge and Tachienlu.²⁶ The British consul in Chengdu duly sent this to the British Legation in Peking who in turn passed it on to London.

For Protestants as for Catholics, the unsettled political conditions of the eastern Tibetan border areas meant frequent upsets and reverses, and this interrupted the continuity of their work. Also like their Catholic counterparts, they engaged in charitable works including schools, orphanages and hospitals. In addition they distributed tracts and Bible extracts with great profusion. In 1918 Sørensen founded the Tibetan Religious Tract Society, which later changed its name to the Tibetan Religious Literature Depot. In 1922, after a ten-week tour he reported that he had distributed 60,000

pamphlets in monasteries, villages and nomad camps.²⁷ The recipients included travellers in Tibetan caravans who could be expected to carry the tracts to Tibet itself. Sørensen had close connections with prominent Tibetans including Kurung Tsering, a senior Nyingmapa lama from the Koko-nor region. Similarly, Shelton's medical work brought him the friendship of such figures as the Ba Lama, the senior incarnate lama in Ba-tang; Jo Rimpoche, an incarnate lama from Atuntse; and the Governor of Markham in Lhasa-controlled Tibet.

Both believed that these high-level contacts would make it possible for them to travel in the Dalai Lama's territory. In 1922 Sørensen requested formal British approval for a forthcoming journey to Lhasa. The British refused to comply. Sørensen set out regardless, but he was stopped by two messengers who informed him that:

the Lhasa Government had received orders from the great ruler of India [i.e. the British government] not to let Chinese and foreigners travel in Tibet and that while they had no objection to let me travel in Tibet, they had to obey orders and therefore must request me to return.²⁸

The private British view, as expressed in an internal note by Teichman, was that the Protestant missionaries were 'sensible, prudent and broad-minded individuals' and – unlike the Catholics – would do no harm in Tibet.²⁹ However, it would not be feasible to distinguish between the two groups, and it was therefore advisable to discourage all missionaries from entering Tibet. Nonetheless, as noted above, the British did not wish to accept public responsibility for the missionaries' exclusion. Sir Beilby Aston, the British Minister in Peking, therefore wrote to Sørensen:

The attitude of this Legation towards foreign travellers desiring to enter Tibet from the Chinese side is that, while we do not see our way to approaching the Tibetan Government on their behalf, the question of their being allowed or refused permission to enter Tibet lies entirely with the Tibetan authorities.³⁰

In 1922 Shelton also tried to travel to Lhasa in the hope of setting up a hospital there. His journey ended even more unhappily than Sørensen's. Shortly after leaving Batang, he received a message from the Governor of Markham forbidding him to enter Tibetan territory. Shelton turned back, but was murdered by bandits before he reached home.³¹

Like Shelton and Sørensen, J. H. Edgar obviously enjoyed travelling in the Tibetan borderlands, and his writings demonstrate a deep interest in the people he found there. However, his published views on the Chinese presence in the region were reminiscent of those which Teichman attributes to the French. In 1931 he published an article entitled 'The Great Open Lands'.³² He began the article by defining China's policy in the region which was to extend control over eastern Tibet partly by force of arms and partly by encouraging intermarriage of Chinese men with Tibetan women so that the entire region would eventually be sinicised. He believed that this policy was working, and continued by asking how Christianity would most readily reach the Tibetan people. In his view only one answer was possible: 'recognize the value of China's time honoured policy and act so as to be in a position to benefit by it'. He recognised that this statement would call forth some 'adverse criticism'. However, he argued:

it seems impossible as things are now, for Christianity to develop in Tibet proper, because its antagonist, Lamaism is a title from all Tibetan families, as well as a local and national form of government. Hence the Christian if banned by his local organization, would become a hopeless outcast.³³

The fact that Edgar expected ‘adverse criticism’ suggests that he believed his thesis to be controversial – as it certainly is from the perspective of the 1990s. However, from a missionary point of view it had a certain logical consistency. The Chinese provided a relatively safe environment for mission work in Kham whereas – as Tornay’s murder later showed – this was scarcely possible in Lhasa-controlled Tibet. Writing in the 1930s, it is not so surprising that Edgar saw Chinese expansion into Tibet as the best hope for Christian missions in the region.

By the late 1940s the picture looked entirely different. After the end of the Second World War there had been a brief resurgence of missionary activity in the Kham area. George Patterson, a Scottish independent missionary associated with the Plymouth Brethren, and his English friend Geoffrey Bull were among the new arrivals in Tachienlu (now more frequently known as Kanding) in 1947.³⁴ However, it was already becoming clear that the defeat of Chiang Kai-shek’s Kuomintang (KMT) was only a matter of time – and that the People’s Liberation Army (PLA) should then turn its attention to Tibet. Contrary to Edgar’s suppositions, Chinese expansion into Tibet turned out to mean communist takeover.

Patterson came to play a role in the politics of the region before it was finally overrun: he became friendly with the Kham Tibetan leader Topgay Pangdatshang and his brother Rapgey. In early 1950 Patterson rode across Tibet to the Indian border on their behalf. His mission was to publicise the impending Chinese invasion and seek Indian and Western help. He appealed in vain and the Chinese army swept through Kham on its way to Lhasa. In 1950 the colonial period in south and east Asia was drawing to a close: Tibet’s colonial period was only just beginning.

4. Conclusion: common themes

Research on the various Tibetan missions is still at an early stage, and the variety in the missionaries’ theologies, nationalities and personal idiosyncrasies argues against simplistic generalisations. Nevertheless, it is possible to identify certain common themes.

The first comes under the heading of ‘protection’. The Moravians and the Church of Scotland could not have worked as they did in India without the political stability provided by the British. The French Catholics and their converts, backed by the French government, demanded Chinese protection in the eastern Tibetan border areas. Similarly, Western Protestants looked to their own governments for consular assistance during the many crises which plagued Tibet’s eastern borders.

The missionaries had much to offer in return for governmental protection. They provided a source of information on Tibetan language and culture both to their governments and to wider academic and popular audiences in their home countries. Both Tharchin and the Protestant missionaries in Kham provided political intelligence to British officials. Moreover, the missions made considerable contributions to the health, education and economic development of the regions in which they worked. Nevertheless, their interests were not identical with those of their governments, and



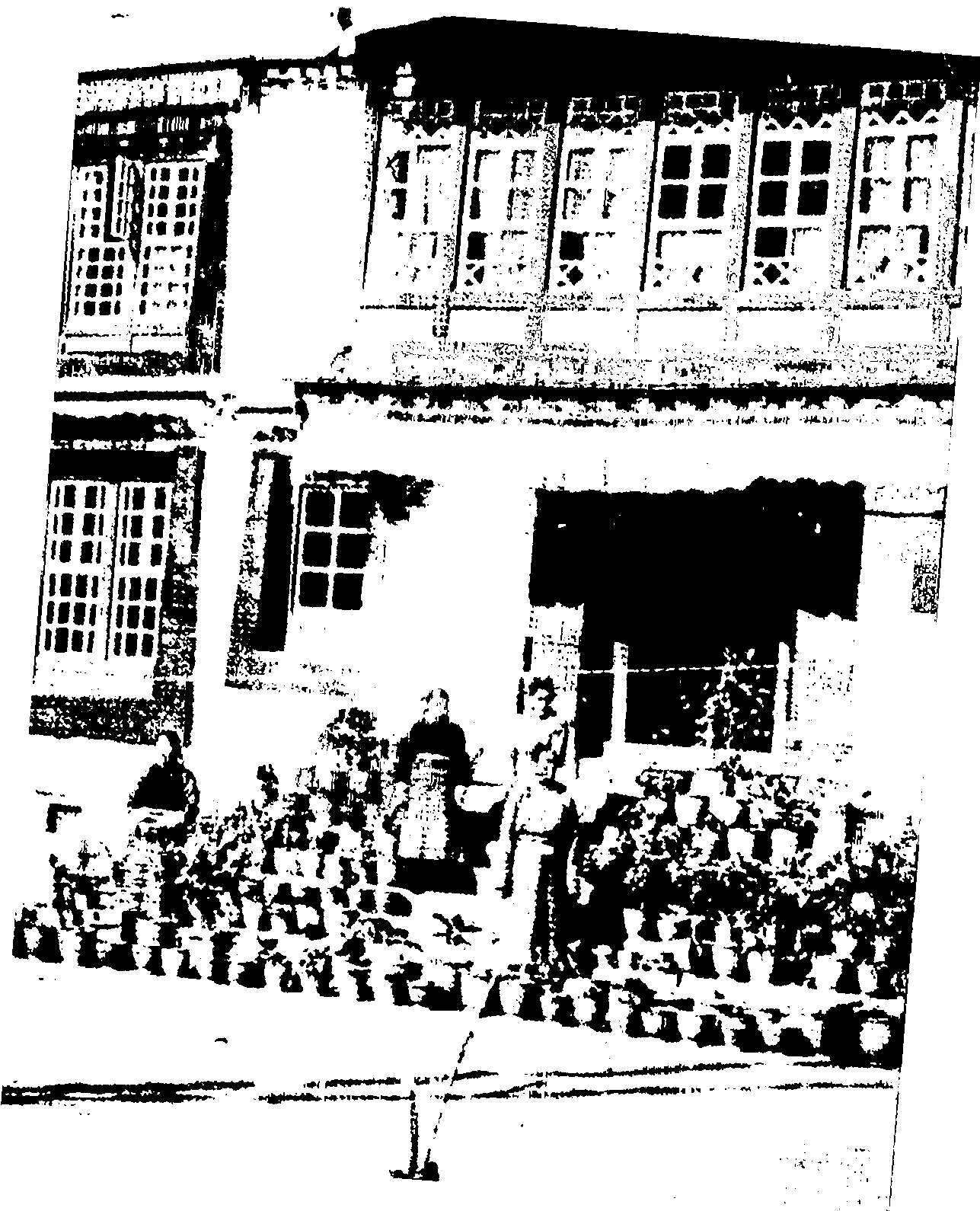
9 Shigatse Dzong (fort).
Oriental and India Office Collection, 1936-7 Lhasa Mission collection.



10 Gyantse Dzong in winter.
Oriental and India Office Collection, Ludlow collection.

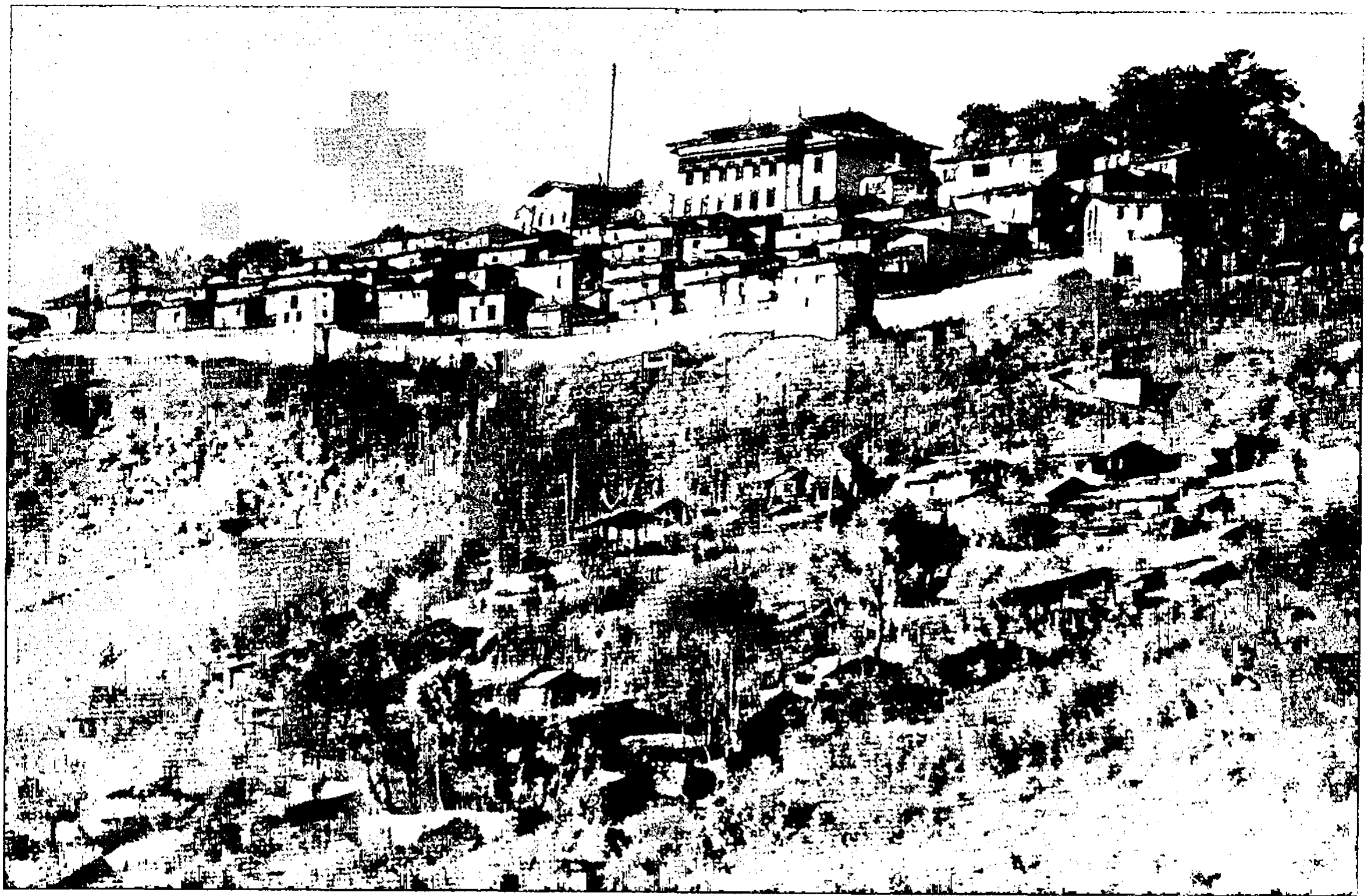


11 Tsarong's house – classical Tibetan architecture.
Oriental and India Office Collection, Ludlow collection.





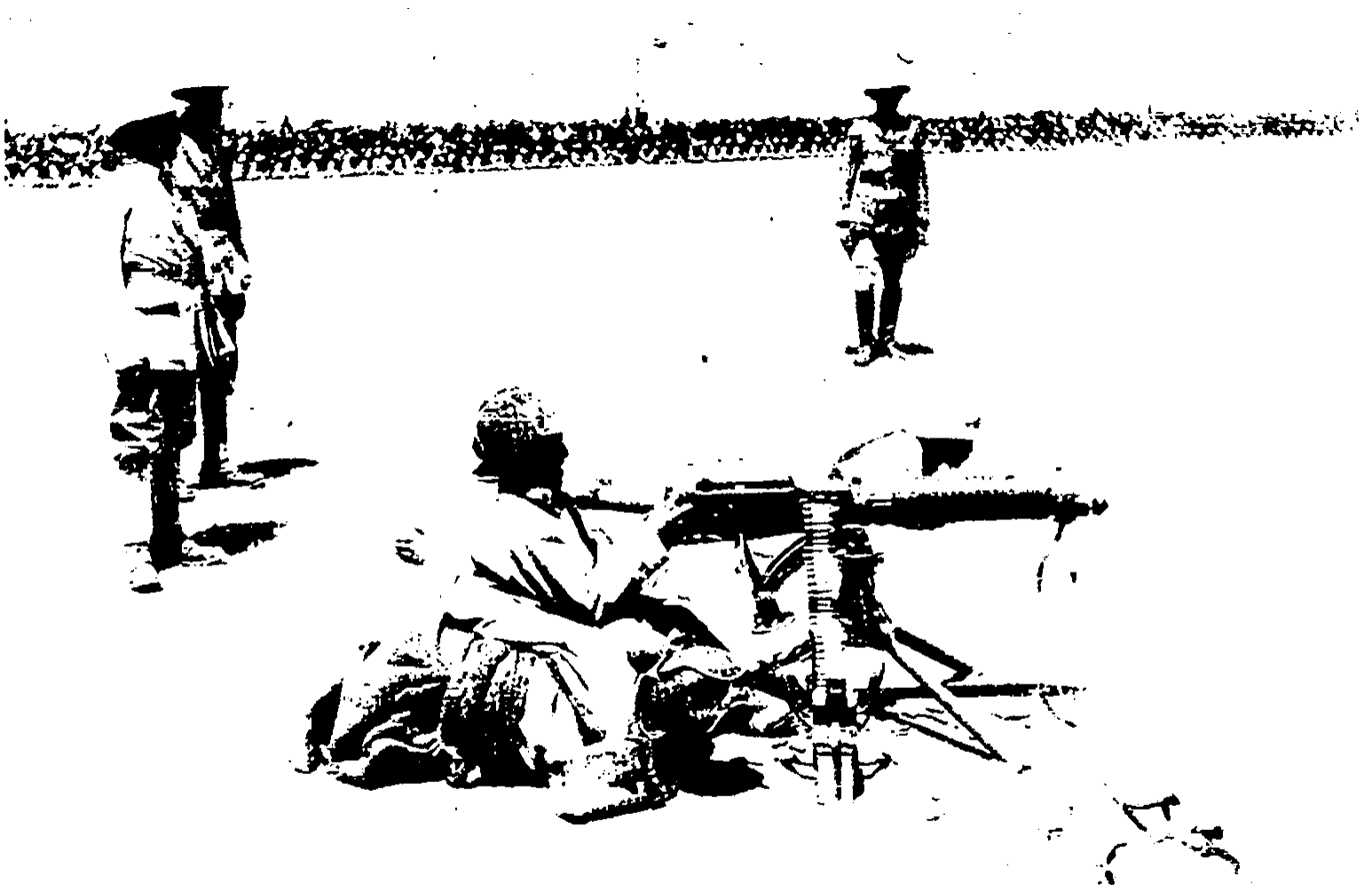
12 Ragyaba [butchers] hut made from yak horn.
Pitt-Rivers Museum, Bell collection.



13 Tawang monastery and village.
Oriental and India Office Collection, Ludlow collection.



14 Traditional cavalry.
Oriental and India Office Collection, Bailey collection.



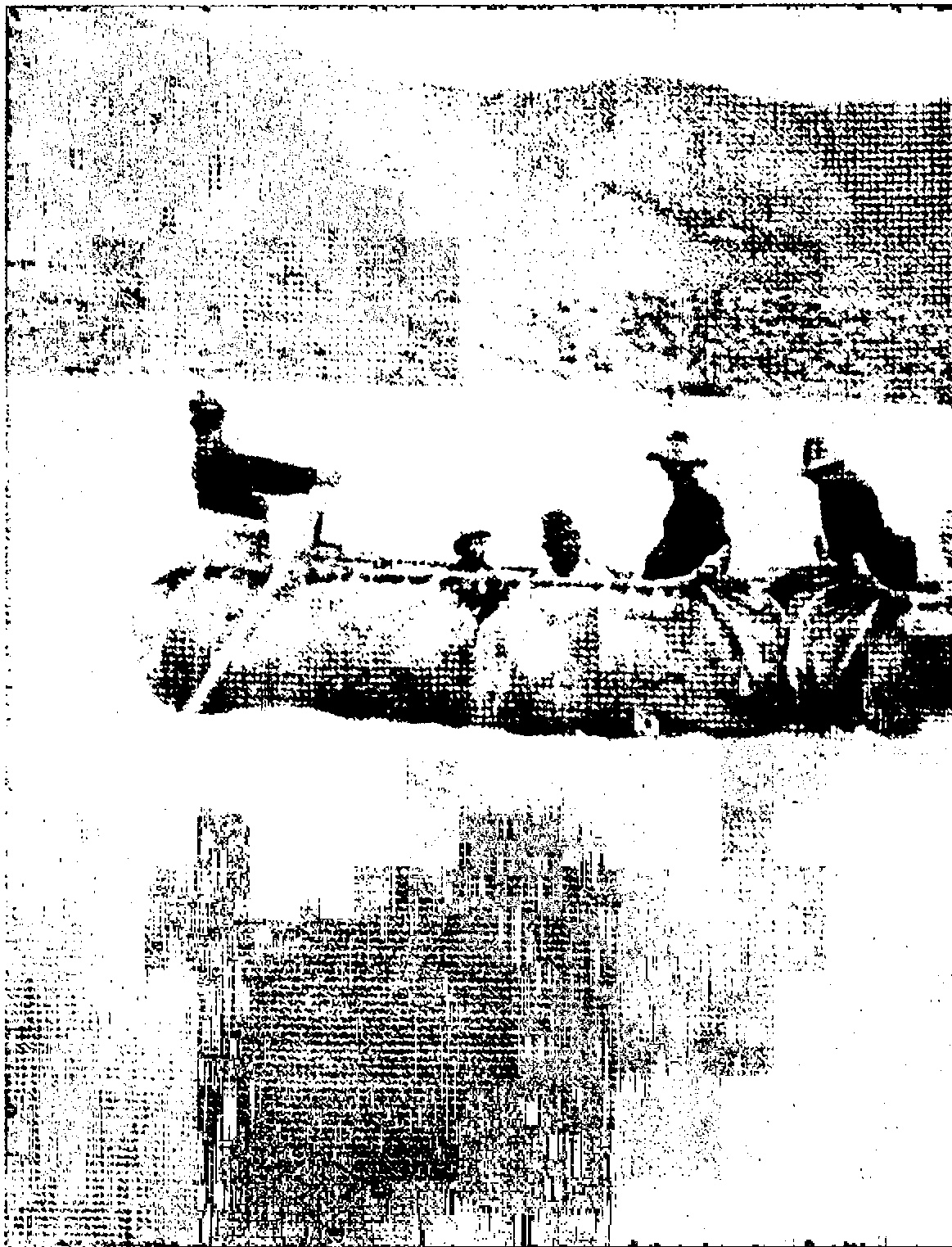
15 Modern weaponry, Tibetan soldiers practising with machine guns c.1937.



16 Lhasa bazaar.

Oriental and India Office Collection, 1936-7 Lhasa Mission collection.





17 Coracle ferry on the Tsangpo river, Lhasa.
Oriental and India Office Collection, 1936-7 Lhasa Mission collection.





18 Gyantse school classroom c. 1924.
Oriental and India Office Collection, Ludlow collection.



19 Gyantse schoolboys playing football.
Oriental and India Office Collection, Ludlow collection.

the clearest example of this is the British prohibition on missionaries travelling to Tibet from India which remained in force until 1947.

A second common theme is the rivalry between Christian missions and Buddhist monasteries, who believed that their religious, economic and spiritual interests were threatened. Buddhism was an integral part of Tibetan society and, as Edgar stated so starkly, Christian converts risked becoming social outcasts. This applied as much in the Indian Himalayas as in Kham and Lhasa-controlled Tibet.

However, the Tibetan attitude to the missions was far from uniform. Tharchin's experiences in Lhasa and the friendships of Shelton and Sørensen in Kham – among other examples – show that Christians often were able to establish close personal relations with prominent Tibetans. By the 1930s and 1940s members of the Lhasa elite were sending their children to church-run schools in Darjeeling.³⁵ More research is needed to clarify these people's attitudes towards Christianity. They obviously were attracted by certain aspects of Western civilisation, but their interest was selective. For them as for most other Tibetans, Christianity remained a religion for 'outsiders'.

In sum, Europe's political and commercial expansion made it possible for the missions to operate in India and China. Paradoxically, but perhaps inevitably, the churches' association with Western interests helped prevent their message being heard in Tibet.

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ON THE ROOF OF THE WORLD

Visits to Tibet

Yunas Singh

Source: *Chronicles of the London Missionary Society* (2 parts) (April 1917): pp. 66–9 (May 1917): pp. 81–4.
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Part 1

TIBET still stands high and dry, in the real as well as the figurative sense, above and beyond the current of the world's life. It is said that in its Buddhist monasteries prayers have been offered for the Allied armies, but in spite of the Younghusband Expedition her people have little direct contact with the rest of mankind.

Her natural barriers are strong reasons for isolation. Between Tibet and India are the mighty Himalayas, whose vast shoulders can only be surmounted at a few points where they are crossed by passes 17,000 feet or more above sea-level. But the mountain paths are yearly scaled by great numbers of Hindu worshippers, for just beyond the passes and within Tibet itself are the holy places of Hind.

The holiest of all are Mount Kailas and Lake Mansarowar. To the Hindu Kailas is heaven itself, and the pivot of the universe. It is the throne of Shiva and the abode of the gods in general. To visit it is to win the highest achievement of Hindu piety; and great companies of resolute pilgrims, braving, the bitter frosts and the dangerous mountain torrents, struggle over the high passes and prostrate themselves at the foot of the glistening snow-decked peak.

What a place in which to proclaim Christ as the fulfiller of all holy desires! How vast might be the consequences if these men who have trudged from the remotest parts of India on their quest for the Holy One found Him in the likeness of the Son of Man!

Between the Tibetan border and the Society's most northerly mission station in India, Almora, there is an ill-defined district known as Bhot and inhabited by a hardy mountain tribe, the Bhotiyas. They trade extensively with the Tibetans, and there is much coming and going between the two peoples. As far back as the year 1890 (before the great L.M.S. forward movement), the late Rev. G. M. Bulloch of Almora visited the Bhot area and planned mission work among the people. It was thought that these sturdy and enterprising nomads, after receiving the Gospel themselves, would make a channel for the entry of Christian truth into Tibet itself.

Work was duly commenced among the Bhotiyas, and, although it has been intermittent in its activities, it has continued as out-station work so far as the strength of the Almora staff allowed.

An important part in the mission has always fallen to the native Indian assistants, who have done invaluable medical and evangelistic work. The education of the children has been more difficult, because the people are never long in one place, moving up or down the valleys to their alternative village camps according to the changing seasons.

The English missionaries, including the ladies, have frequently visited Milam (nearly 12,000 feet above the sea), the last Bhotiya village before the Tibetan boundary is reached.

Mr. Gerard Agnew (brother-in-law to Lord Kinnaird) was at one time a member of the Society's Almora staff, and he made three trips into Tibet – on the second occasion being accompanied by the Rev. F. F. Longman.

On his third visit Mr. Agnew, disguised as a Hindu pilgrim, managed to reach Lake Mansarowar, calling at a number of Buddhist monasteries, where copies of the Tibetan Scriptures were left.

Tibet is still virtually a closed land to the white missionary, but there seems less difficulty in getting access by means of Hindu teachers.

Last year Yunas Singh, one of our Indian evangelists, reached the holy places, and his own interesting story which follows has recently arrived.

Yunas Singh's narrative

My account of Tibet shall be a short one. From my childhood I had heard tales of this wonderful country, but now by God's grace the time has come when all preparations for going there are completed. The day of departure has actually come. The weather is not clear, but we cannot hold back now. The sheep and mules (belonging to our Bhotiya companions) have their loads ready strapped on. Our companions are taking farewell of their dear ones. We have no one specially to part from here; that has been done on a former occasion; but there is one Friend whom we wish to meet before starting and indeed to take with us. So going to our room we read our Lord's last command and promise, also the Traveller's Psalm, and then commend ourselves to our Maker in prayer. Then, staff in hand, we started upon our journey (July 12, 1916).

Just in front I saw a "Faqir Mahatma" (holy mendicant pilgrim), wearing a warm woolen coat, and shouting as he went. I did not at once recognise him, for yesterday I had seen him clad in the usual scanty garment of the Sadhu. Today there was a change, for some of his Bhotiya followers had given him this coat as a protection from the cold. I walked on ahead with the Sadhu. Amongst all our company this holy man seemed the only one who could enjoy the beauties of nature; the rest, although many of them were men of wealth and position, seemed quite oblivious to these things. Our road lay along the side of the river Gwankha. It could hardly be called a road; it was only a pathway. Walking along we conversed with the holy man about the purity and glory of God. I perceived that he was really a seeker of the truth and a well-wisher to his country. He had only adopted the Sadhu's dress in order to attract the attention of the public. This dress has certainly a great attraction; in Tibet, as well as in India, men adopt the yellow robe, and it is much respected.

We spent the first night at Dang, and as there was thick snow on the pass before us we made up our minds to stay for the day. It was bitterly cold, but there were no sticks for firewood. One man went a distance of over a mile hunting for wood; when he returned we were able to cook a little food. It is to be noted that we are at an altitude of 15,000 ft. After noon it cleared, and the sun began to shine once more; the scene before us was enchanting. Four or five of us, amongst whom were my Bhotiya friends, Kharak Rai and Bijay Singh, went to see the beautiful glacier at the source of the Gwankha. The ice is more than 150 ft. thick and at its head is shaped into the form of an arch, from beneath which the waters of the river flow swiftly out.

It was still dark when we were waked on July 14th, and we seemed to have scarcely fallen asleep. Our companions were loading up their sheep and goats, jibbus and mules.

We had often heard tales about this day's journey, and now we saw for ourselves. It was the most difficult of all the marches, for one is obliged to cross the three lofty snow passes, and tomorrow we should be on the plain of Tibet. Courage then; we must conquer the difficulties, we must bear the hardships.

Having crossed the glacier we climbed up along its edge: ahead we could see peak after peak to be climbed, and one's heart sank. On our left hand was a wide stretch of snow plain from which an icy wind blew, numbing hands and ears. One peak after another we climbed, and still there were more ahead.

We climbed, however, and came to a flatter piece of the way, and our companions told us that now Untadhura (Camel Pass) lay before us – the first of the three difficult passes.

The pass is 17,000 ft. high, and one long steep ascent lay in front of us. All the company stopped to munch a little dry "chana".

That was all the food we were to get until the end of the day. But one has no appetite for food: drinking cold water gives one a headache, and dry food is difficult to swallow. Off we started again, but had not climbed ten paces when we began to feel tired.

Ten paces more, and our feet felt like lead and breath came short. In the same way the pack animals had to stop every few steps for breath. We got over half a mile, and found that the higher we climbed the more difficult it became to move. One wanted to sit down every few feet, but we were not allowed to sit down, and had to rest standing. At last we reached the top.

At the summit of the pass we began to meet an ice-cold wind, and tiny flakes of snow whirled in the air.

The path was muddy beyond description, but we could not stop to rest long, and began the descent, our feet slipping over the mud.

Truly at this time our senses seemed to leave us: our heads swam, our feet were beyond our control. My companion (Gopal Singh) was in a worse condition than myself: at one place his feet sank in a snow-drift. But somehow we at last got down and began the ascent of the second pass.

The second pass is called Jainti, and its altitude is 17,000 or 18,000 ft. It does not look as steep as the Unta Pass, but it is just as difficult to climb. We had only got a quarter of the way up when we were completely exhausted and had not strength to go another step. Seeing our condition our Bhotiya friends gave us a mount for a short distance and walked along with us.

The name of the third pass is Kungri-Bingri and its height is 18,000 ft., and it is the steepest ascent of all. Again our Bhotiya friends gave us help, and we were able to cross this pass too. Kungri-Bingri forms a gateway between India and Tibet. On all sides great peaks stand round it as though some sculptor had shaped them and placed them there. It is difficult to reach this gateway from either side, and it thus forms a great protection for India.

I looked back once more towards India, but only saw snow-peaks. Before us lay the low hills of Tibet, presenting a beautiful sight. Although no one came to greet us as we entered Tibet, I felt in my heart that nature and nature's God were bidding us. "Welcome" – "Welcome" in no uncertain voice. My heart was drawn out to Tibet as I first beheld it, and the more I saw of the land the more did I feel its attraction.

Weariness itself seemed to vanish. From the top of the pass we descended four or five miles to the banks of the river Chhirchan. The pole for our tent had not arrived, so we used our sticks as tent-poles and lay down to rest.

The day's difficult work was over, we felt as though we had won a battle, and in a few days we should have forgotten the weariness. I kept thinking: "We have reached Tibet; a little while ago we were in India, now we are in Tibet. Is it true, or are we in a dream?"

When I realised the truth I felt strangely glad and exultant. We were to spend our first night under Tibetan skies; we can sleep peacefully, for God is with us here.

Part 2

About three miles farther on we pitched our tent on the sandy bank of the stream. Tibet has a cold climate, but still, the heat of the sun, in the middle of a clear windless day, is unbearable. It was so on that day, but an hour later the wind began to blow, covering everything with dust, and by evening we were shivering with cold.

Passing Topku and Latna we arrived at Thaganj. Early in the day we passed by a round-topped mountain which the people call Gari (the fort). It is said to contain some prehistoric weapons. A little farther on and our feet were really on the great Tibetan plain. This plain is green and fertile, and corresponds to the jungles of India.

In truth I had never before enjoyed such a beautiful sight, and my heart rejoiced. In many places there was just green grass, in others the little Dama shrub grew, reminding one of the tea-plant. The "Dama" is the only kind of tree or shrub known in the land. It has a circumference of 4-5 ft., and its height is 1 and a 1/2 half ft. The Tibetans have no other kind of wood. The leaf is small, like the tamarind leaf, but the wood is resinous, so that whether green or dry it burns well.

It is no easy thing to cook a meal in Tibet. First of all something has to be constructed to keep off the wind; then to keep the fire alight one must have some kind of bellows, and keep blowing up the flame. Cooking is indeed very difficult: we often felt ourselves fortunate if we got even one meal in the day.

It is only two or three miles to Chhinku. The meaning of Chhinku (Chhia-nagna) is "black water" in Tibetan: the water of this spring was certainly black as ink. We stayed on the other side of the spring. The wind was blowing strongly as usual, but by now we were somewhat used to it, and also were in a better condition of health; so Gopal and I started out for a walk over the hillocks and plain. Kharak Rai had stayed behind on some business, and Nath Ji with him, so we two were alone. We stayed out until the evening, enjoying the open plain and the buffeting of the wind.

Next day we started early again. Our path lay beside the big river Gunyangti, and was all in the jungle: herds of horses added beauty to the scene. Beautiful beyond description were the cool gentle morning breeze and the golden rays of the sun. Try to imagine the scene: the flocks of sheep and goats wandering on ahead, the horses and mules following on behind, the music of their bells filling the air.

The herdsmen walk along, some in front some behind, calling to the animals or playing on their pipes.

To-day a Tibetan man, servant of some tax-collector, came towards our tent. Megh Singh knew him, and had a long talk with him. When I had the opportunity I went up to them, and seeing I was a stranger he examined me curiously. Megh Singh acted as interpreter, and we asked each other many questions. I was astonished to find how simple and gentle the Tibetans are; one can make friends with them at once.

Three days later we descried the smoke rising from Gyanima fires, and thought we should soon be there. At last, at about eleven o'clock, we reached the end of that plain and came to Gyanima.

It was eleven days since we had left Milam, and we now saw the first signs of habitation again. Even this habitation will be only of short duration. When the fair is over these dwellings will be removed too; in fact, it is a village of tents. Gyanima fair, or market, is held every year from June 15 to August 31.

There are splendid opportunities for service in Gyanima, such opportunities as it would be difficult to find elsewhere.

These Tibetans are a religious people. As they talk or walk they are practising their religion: either counting their beads, or turning their prayer-wheel, or repeating religious phrases. When they see a stranger they receive him with great friendliness, examine his clothes, etc., carefully, and there is at once an opportunity for making friends. They seem very simple-hearted. What better opportunity could one have for service than in Tibet? Up till now we may have been ignorant of it; but now that our eyes and ears are opened, shall we close them again?

One day I met an official who seemed a very worthy and sensible man. He was talking to Bijai Singh, and Kharak Rai explained to me that he was a revenue officer. I was determined to approach him and my companions came with me. I then began questioning Bijai Singh, "Who is this gentleman? Why has he come here?" etc. In this way I got into a conversation with him.

I approached him on the subject of Gyanima streets and their condition, and asked if some cleaning could not be undertaken. He answered that he had no authority over these matters, but that he would inquire if it could be done. The next day some cleaning was started, perhaps for the first time in the history of Gyanima.

I talked to this official for a long time, and on parting he said he would arrange another meeting, and this took place some days later. He had heard before of the beloved name of Jesus, and we talked of Him, Kharak Rai interpreting for us. I asked him if it would be possible to start mission work in Tibet free from interference, and he promised to ask his Government about it, and also to give what help he could towards getting the request granted.

Another Tibetan – a lama – talked to me. He noticed that my hair was short all over, and thought I must be a lama, for in this country only the lamas (priests) shave their heads, and the rest wear pig-tails. When he heard that I was a follower, a priest, of the great lama Jesus Christ, he at once asked for some hair from my head. Only

after a good deal of explanation did he withdraw his request. If even the hairs of the head of a servant of Jesus are esteemed so highly, what honour would not be given to the Lord Himself?

We only stayed three or four days in Gyanima, our intention being to proceed quickly to Kailas, and on our return spend as much time as possible in Gyanima. We started for Kailas with about twenty pilgrims.

Kailas

The journey from Gyanima to Kailas can be accomplished in two days, but it leaves one very tired. We approached the cave as it was getting dark, and had still a climb to do to reach it. "Lindi-gufa" is the name of this cave, and it is the most famous of the caves which encircle Kailas.

The cave (so called) is situated just at the foot of the mountain, and is in the form of a square. I am correct in saying that this was the first building I had been since leaving Milam.

We cleaned up a place for ourselves on a dirty verandah, and put down our bedding. Now the only thing we cried out for was tea; there was no hope of getting food that day, so we pinned our hopes on tea. When the lama heard of this he had some tea made. We drank the tea and he made some tea for our Bhotiya friends too (with ghee and salt). The rest of the pilgrims, poor things, had to go thirsty, for they were Hindus. Oh, how fettered India is by her caste chains! Tibetans do not keep caste at all, and will eat with any one. The Bhotiyas eat with them when in Tibet, but when they return to their own country they become very strict keepers of caste again.

In a little while the chief lama came in and announced that all should get their offerings of incense and lights ready, but we made negative signs with our hands. All our companions went up to present these lights as offerings to the name of Kailas, but we knelt down and in prayer offered ourselves to our Lord and Master Jesus. You can understand how earnestly we prayed in this great place of idol-worship.

O Lord, hear our prayer, and grant that some day this place may be consecrated to Thy worship!

Next morning, before it was light, we heard the murmuring of voices from the opposite room, and knew that the lamas were engaged in their worship. At once I began to praise my Saviour, and prayed for the lamas and all his followers. Meanwhile a lama came into our room repeating "Parmeshwar, Parmeshwar," and calling the people to come to the worship of the idols. I asked one of my friends to tell him that we were disciples of Jesus Christ, and worshipped God who is a Spirit, through Jesus. The lama looked rather displeased, and muttering something went away. Our companions followed him one by one, and some more lamas coming in, and seeing us alone, looked at us curiously. We tried by signs to make them understand "this mountain is not God" but we were not successful. Then we said "Ngaranj lama Yisu" (our lama is Jesus), when they smiled, and repeating the word "Jesus, Jesus," went away.

We now went on to see the second cave, which is five miles distant. The road runs at the foot of Kailas on the right bank of the river; for a river runs from east to west round the base of the mountain. Pilgrims from India start their journey from the western end, but the Tibetans come round from the north. The second cave is called

Dharphu. From Dharphu we had a very near and beautiful view of Kailas. On the way to the third cave we had to climb a high peak of 17,000 or 18,000 ft. We were not much distressed over this ascent, as in travelling about we had got used to the air of Tibet. At the summit we found ourselves near a snow-covered lake; it lies on the north-east of Kailas, and is a quarter of a mile in circumference. Snow lies at its surface, and the ice at its edge is 4 to 6 inches thick. The pilgrims had to bathe here, and after bathing they all met and took a little uncooked food together. They have a saying that those who eat together in this place will enter heaven together.

On the way to Gaurikund pilgrims have to crawl underneath a stone – it is said to be the door to heaven. We could not help laughing at this sight; one or two we helped to pull through.

We had good opportunities here, and at Gaurikund, of speaking for Christ. Gaurikund is very beautiful, but Kailas cannot be seen from it. We had now to descend straight one mile to the banks of the river. Here was a stone on which the poor pilgrims this time had to rub their foreheads, and bow before Kailas.

At first I was inclined to laugh, but afterwards tried to explain their mistake to these people.

About three miles farther on we reached the third cave, “Jumal phu.” We had fasted all day, and now with difficulty got a little tea ready and then rested. This cave was much like the others, the idols were about the same, and the lamas as ignorant.

The Lakes Mansarowar and Rakshash

After encircling Kailas mountain the pilgrims come to Mansarowar and Rakshash lakes to bathe. The lakes lie to the south of Kailas: the first is ten miles distant and the latter eight miles. It is specially meritorious to bathe in Lake Mansarowar, so pilgrims do not stay at Rakshash, but come straight on.

Starting early in the morning we reached Mansarowar lake at 11 or 12 o'clock.

Our companions had gone on before to the monastery, then returned to the shores of the lake to prepare their ceremonies – head shaving, bathing etc. We remained lost in admiration of the beauty of the lake. How wonderful it is that God should have placed this large and beautiful fresh-water lake at such a height among the mountains! Because of its beauty, no doubt, men have thought of worshipping it. From the top of a little hill we could see three-quarters of the lake – it is said to be thirty miles in extent.

Lake Rakshash is not considered as holy as Mansarowar; therefore pilgrims do not often visit it.

We returned to Gyanima, our hearts glad but our bodies tired. We pitched our tent near Kalyan Singh, and remained with him.

For a week now we had splendid opportunities to work for Christ. We spent most of our time with the Bhotiyas. After a five days march we reached Chhirchan at the foot of the Himalayan pass. We were well looked after, for of our Dhamsaktu Bhotiya friends, Jasod Singh, Pratap Singh, and Bhawan Singh were with us.

Shortly after arrival on the first peak, the sun's rays appeared. I looked back for the last time on the Kailas peak in all its glory and beauty. My spirit was full of hope and comfort, as I looked again at the Tibetan plain; then I turned and fixed my thoughts once more on India. We crossed all three passes in four or five hours. On the summit

of Unta pass we paused and thanked God; then knowing that we could reach Milam by the evening, we went on quickly, leaving our friends to follow with their flocks and herds. We reached Milam safely at about 4 p.m.

We pray that God will accept the work that has been done for Him in Tibet, and will grant that many others of His servants may enter into this "land of promise" and proclaim the Good Tidings. [A map of Yunas Singh's journey appeared in THE CHRONICLE for April. {Ed: Omitted}]

Fuller particulars of the people and country will be found in "Holy Himalaya" by E. S. Oakley (Oliphants, 5s. net).]

THE END

THE POLITICAL TESTAMENT OF H. H. THE 13TH DALAI LAMA

Sir Charles Bell

Source: C. A. Bell, *Portrait of a Dalai Lama: The Life and Times of the Great Thirteenth*, London, 1946 (Wisdom reprint, 1987), pp. 426–32, 457–8. The chapter includes the translation by Bell of the 13th Dalai Lama's "Last Testament".

During 1931 the Nechung Oracle let it be known that the Dalai Lama was ill, and likely to depart soon to the Honourable Field. Consequently he advised the Tibetan Government to offer prayers to him to remain in this life. The Cabinet did so.

The Dalai Lama made his reply to their prayers in a book of nine small pages which he wrote with his own hand, it being of so great importance. This is the only book of which it can be said with absolute certainty that it was written by a Dalai Lama. A remarkable book indeed.

The book was printed on the usual Tibetan wooden blocks. The blocks were made in Lhasa; and, later on, the Chief Minister of the subordinate Government at Tashi Lhunpo had fresh printing blocks made there.

Nine or ten months after the Dalai Lama's death the Chief Prophet of the great Samye monastery gave me his printed copy of this testament. Himself a most devoted admirer of the Dalai Lama, he knew – as most Tibetans did – the close friendship that united the Dalai Lama and myself. When giving me the book, he said, "Your mind is seen in it," referring to the advice that I gave to the Inmost One during our long conversations with each other.

In conversation, Tibetans term this little book the Precious Protector's *Kachem*; i.e. his Last Testament. In it he justifies his rule, reprimands his subjects, and instructs them how to conduct themselves. It contains a large amount of political matter, and might therefore also be termed his Political Testament.

"Water Monkey Year.¹ In consequence of the prophecy of the Nechung Oracle, all the people of Tibet, the Yellow and the Grey, offered prayers to the Precious Protector to remain for a long time in this life. The essence of that petition and the Precious Protector's reply to it are printed here together in this book. The reply, like a precious medicine, restores the fat which had become rotten, and enables all to see at once the dark places. It is the fresh nectar of the gods."

The essence of the above petition is given here:

“We, the Prime Minister, the Members of the Cabinet, the ecclesiastical and civil officials, in consequence of the Nechung Oracle’s prophecy, have jointly made earnest supplication to the Precious Protector to remain long in this life. We have done this in accordance with the discourses of the Lord Buddha. We have all made these prayers in accordance with our different ranks and duties, and we have made them to the best of our ability. Please do not be angry with us; this is the prayer of us all, the Yellow and the Grey.”

The reply of the Dalai Lama then begins thus:

“I was not identified in accordance with the previous custom of the golden urn. It was judged unnecessary, for from the prophecies and divinations it was clear that I was the true Incarnation. And so I was enthroned. In accordance with the old custom, a Regent was appointed for a time. This was the Hutuktu;² also the Head Lama of the Purchok Monastery, a learned and saintly man. I joined the monkhood. I became a novice. I read several books, for instance *The Great Centre*,³ and numerous books on theological disputation, and the long succession of exoteric and esoteric discourses by the Lord Buddha with meanings as vast as the ocean. I was invested by my instructors with spiritual power.⁴ I worked very hard every day without cessation, to the utmost of my powers, and thus attained a moderate amount of knowledge and ability.

“When I arrived at the age of eighteen, in accordance with the former custom, I had come to the time at which I should carry on the secular and the spiritual administration of the country. Though I had not hitherto exercised the religious or secular control, and though I was lacking in skill and resource, yet the whole of Tibet, both supreme beings and human beings, requested me to take up the power. The great Manchu Emperor, appointed by Heaven, gave me a similar order, which I placed on my head. I took up the spiritual and secular administration. From that time forward there was no leisure for me, no time for pleasure. Day and night I had to ponder anxiously over problems of Church and State, in order to decide how each might prosper best. I had to consider the welfare of the peasantry, how best to remove their sorrows; how to open the three doors of promptitude, impartiality, and the removal of injuries.

“In the Wood Dragon year⁵ there arrived a great army of soldiers under the British Government. Had I considered my own comfort, I could have come to an amicable settlement with them. But if our country had thereby suffered afterwards, it would have been like the rubbing out of a footprint. Formerly, the Great Fifth Dalai Lama and the Manchu Emperor had made an agreement to help each other in the way that a monk and a layman help each other. So although it entailed hardship on me, I paid no attention to that, but went over northern Tibet, through China and Mongolia, to the great capital, Golden Peking. The Sovereigns, mother and son,⁶ treated me well beyond measure. But shortly afterwards the mother and the son both died, one after the other.

“After this, the Emperor Shontong was enthroned, and to him I represented fully the facts of our case. Keeping the whole case of Tibet in my mind, I returned, but the Amban in Tibet representing matters falsely, Chinese officers and soldiers arrived in Lhasa, and seized the power over the administration of Tibet. Then I, the King, and

with me my Ministers and other governmental officers, came to the holy land of India, paying no attention to the hardships of the journey. We arrived in good health, and through the British Government we represented matters fully to the Government of China.

“Religious services were held on behalf of the Faith and the secular side of State affairs. These ensured the full ripening of the evil deeds of the Chinese, and in consequence, internal commotion broke out in China, and the time was changed.⁷ The Chinese troops in Tibet had none to help them; they became stagnant like a pond, and therefore, bit by bit, we were able to expel them from the country. As for myself, I came back to Tibet, the land that I have to protect, the field of religion. From that year, the year of the Water Bull,⁸ to this present Water Monkey year, this land of Tibet has become completely happy and prosperous; it is like a land made new. All the people are at ease and happy.

“This is clearly evident from the records in the State archives. You all, supreme beings and human beings, are aware of these facts. I have written these matters briefly, for if I were to explain them in detail, a very long letter would be required. I have been very merciful in all things. Consider this and understand it, all ye people! Do not make your desires great. Make them small! Understand that what has been done is excellent! If the work that has been performed is of advantage to Tibet, harmonise your minds with it, and know that your desires have been fulfilled. I do not say that I have performed all this. I do not recount these matters in any hope that people will say that the Dalai Lama has done this work; of that my hope is less than a single seed of sesame.

“Having regard to my present age, it were better that I should lay down the ecclesiastical and temporal power, and devote the short remainder of this life to religious devotion. My future lives are many, and I should like to devote myself entirely to spiritual concerns. But by reason of the Guardian Deities inside my body and my Root Lama, people come to me to hear religion, they come to me to decide their disputes, and their hope lies deep in their hearts that I will not give up the secular administration.⁹ So far I have done my work to the best of my ability, but I am nearly fifty-eight years old, when it will become difficult to carry on the ecclesiastical and secular work any longer. This is understood by all, is it not.¹⁰

“The Government of India is near to us and has a large army. The Government of China also has a large army. We should therefore maintain firm friendship with these two; both are powerful.

“There are one or two small countries over there that show hostility towards us.¹¹ In order to prevail against them, you must enlist in the army young, vigorous men, and you must give military training of such a kind as will benefit afterwards.

“Besides, the present is the time of the Five Kinds of Degeneration¹² in all countries. In the worst class is the manner of working among the red people.¹³ They do not allow search to be made for the new Incarnation of the Grand Lama of Urga. They have seized and taken away all the sacred objects from the monasteries. They have made monks to work as soldiers. They have broken religion, so that not even the name of it remains. Have you heard of all these things that have happened at Urga? And they are still continuing. It may happen that here in the centre of Tibet the Religion and the secular administration may be attacked both from the outside and from the inside.¹⁴ Unless we can guard our own country, it will now happen that the Dalai

and Panchen Lamas, the Father and the Son, the Holders of the Faith, the glorious Rebirths, will be broken down and left without a name. As regards the monasteries and the monks and nuns, their lands and other properties will be destroyed. The administrative customs of the Three Religious Kings¹⁵ will be weakened. The officers of the State, ecclesiastical and secular, will find their lands seized and their other property confiscated, and they themselves made to serve their enemies, or wander about the country as beggars do. All beings will be sunk in great hardship and in overpowering fear; the days and the nights will drag on slowly in suffering.

“Do not be traitors to Church and State by working for another country against your own. Tibet is happy, and in comfort now; the matter rests in your own hands. All civil and military matters should be organised with knowledge; act in harmony with each other; do not pretend that you can do what you cannot do. The improvement of the secular administration depends on your ecclesiastical and secular officials. High officials, low officials, and peasants must all act in harmony to bring happiness to Tibet: one person alone cannot lift a heavy carpet; several must unite to do so.

“What is to be done and what to be omitted, consider that, and do all your work without harbouring doubt, in the manner desired by the Teacher¹⁶ who knows everything as though it lay before his eyes. Work in that spirit and all will turn out well. Those who work zealously like that on the religious and secular side in accordance with my will, not those who show obedience before my face, but plan evil behind my back, those I will take under my protection, both in this life and the next. All will see that the Protectors of the Religion help those who walk in The Way. Those who break away from law and custom and follow an evil road, these the Protectors will certainly punish. Those who regard only their own interests, who help only those who please them and do not help others, those who, as at present, are untrustworthy, and do not exert themselves to work well, the aims of these will not be fulfilled, and all will see it. Then these may say, “What ought we to do now?” and many repent of their former actions, but there will be no advantage therefrom. You will all see that, as long as I live, Tibet will remain happy and prosperous, as indeed it is at present.

“Whatever troubles befall the people, I shall see, and I shall hold religious services for them in the future, as I have done in the past.

“Now, I have given you clear instructions. There is no need for me to continue it further. The most important need for the welfare of the inside¹⁷ is that you should repent of your wrong actions in the past and ponder carefully and always on my instructions in the future.

“If you are able to do this, I for my part will carry on the religious and civil administration to the best of my ability, so that good may result both now and in the future. I will keep in my mind the names and the purposes of all you ecclesiastical and secular officials. As for all the subjects, I will arrange that for the space of several hundreds of years they shall remain happy and prosperous as at present, and be free from great suffering. Be all of one mind and work with zeal to the best of your ability, as in the olden days. That in itself will constitute a religious service; there is no need for you to perform any other religious services.

“The above are my instructions in answer to your representations. It is of great importance that, day and night, in your four actions,¹⁸ you should deliberate carefully on what I have written, and that without error you should reject what is evil, and follow what is good.”

Such was the letter that the Dalai Lama wrote to his people, both supreme beings and human beings, and especially to those to whom he, "The Great Owner" had entrusted the ecclesiastical as well as the secular government.

Notes

[Editor's note: original footnote numbers 28–45]

- 1 February 1932 to February 1933.
- 2 A Hutuktu is a very high Lama; there are only a few of them.
- 3 A book on Metaphysics, in five volumes.
- 4 They placed images, holy books, etc. on the Dalai Lama's head, for even a Dalai Lama cannot give power until he first empowered himself.
- 5 1904.
- 6 The Dowager Empress and the Manchu Emperor.
- 7 The Chinese Revolution broke out and the Emperor was dethroned.
- 8 1913.
- 9 The Dalai Lama was the ruler of Tibet. Therefore, as is the Tibetan custom, he first explained the events of his life, his different actions and his reasons for them, before explaining what course should be followed in the future.
- 10 Tibetans regard this as a prophecy, for the Dalai Lama died when fifty-eight years old (Tibetan reckoning).
- 11 This refers mainly to Nepal, and in a lesser degree to Bhutan, for occasionally there was a disagreement with her also. In such cases it is not the Tibetan custom to mention names, but an indication of this kind is given.
- 12 War, calamities of nature, shortening of the period of a human life, etc.
- 13 The U.S.S.R.
- 14 As actually happened, after the Dalai Lama's death, when Lungshar and his band tried to seize the Regent and Ministers.
- 15 Srong. Tsen gam. Po (Straight Strong Deep), Tri. Song. De. Tsen and Ralpachan, who reigned during the period AD 600–900.
- 16 Padma Sambhava.
- 17 Tibet.
- 18 Walking, standing, sitting, sleeping.

TSARONG, LUNGSHAR AND KUNPHELA

K. Dhondup

Source: K. Dhondup, *The Water-Bird and Other Years: A History of the 13th Dalai Lama and After*, New Delhi: Rawang Publishers, 1986, pp. 64–91.

On 17th November, the 13th Dalai Lama, already tired and distressed by the weak and inefficient conduct of his officials whom he severely reprimanded in his *Last Political Testament*, was taken with a slight cold. But he did not show it. He knew he was the link of unity on which Tibet survived. He attended the *Monlam Chenmo* and the people were relieved. But his health went from bad to worse. And he failed to attend *Gaden Ngacho* – the birth and death anniversary of Tsongkhapa – always attended by a Dalai Lama and the people suspected he was sick. But there was no way of knowing. Kunphela, the last favourite of the Dalai Lama, took every precaution to conceal it. On 3rd December, the Dalai Lama's condition became critical. Kunphela at once summoned the attendants and at 11 P.M., called the medium of Nechung Oracle who came at once, in great hurry, without even putting on his ceremonial robes. That same night, the Nechung Oracle medium gave the Dalai Lama a powder medicine. As the medium came out, Jampa-la, the Dalai Lama's regular doctor pointed out to the Nechung medium that the wrong medicine has been administered. Soon afterwards, the Nechung medium gave a second medicine according to the regular doctor's prescription. But both these medicines failed to improve the worsening condition of the Dalai Lama. That morning, the government officials were informed. The Gaden Tripa, the Prime Minister, the Cabinet members and the other important officials immediately rushed to Kunphela and requested for an audience with the Dalai Lama. Kunphela refused them an audience. In the afternoon, the government officials were admitted to his audience. They unanimously pleaded for his life. But the Dalai Lama had lost the power of speech. That night at about 7.30 P.M. the Dalai Lama passed away. A gloom of sadness and irreparable loss descended on the city of Lhasa, and filled the whole landscape of Tibet with mourning. The future of Tibet looked uncertain. The government was dazed and distracted by the loss of the Dalai Lama. Into this beleaguered and uncertain scene, fate cast the dark shadow of Lungshar Dorjee Tsegyal, the second favourite of the late Dalai Lama. His lust for power and love for intrigue now found an avenue for its fullest expression against Kunphela with whom he had long sought his vendetta. Lhasa was thick with the rumours of poisoning and black magic. Many rumoured the Dalai Lama passed away in anger and distress as Kunphela thwarted his orders and issued his own orders in the name of the Dalai

Lama. For Lungshar, the setting could not have been better. And once he set his mind on a vendetta, he pursued it with diabolical vehemence and skill. But away and aloof from this political drama of cutting each other's throats stood Tsarong Dazang Dadul, the earliest and the most progressive favourite of the late Dalai Lama, whose demotion and downfall from the Lhasa hierarchy was partly engineered by Lungshar. Tsarong Dazang Dadul was not of the aristocracy by birth. He was born in 1885 in a peasant family in Phenpo, situated to the north of Lhasa. Here his father owned a small farm and made arrows. But it was in Lhasa, serving the headmaster of the Potala monk officials' school that he attracted the attention of the Dalai Lama. Impressed by the youth's skill and cleverness, the Dalai Lama made him his favourite and he was called Chensal (favourite) Namgang. He accompanied the Dalai Lama on his first exile to Mongolia and China in 1904. When the pursuing Chinese soldiers threatened the life of the Dalai Lama in 1910, Chensal Namgang courageously stopped the 300 Chinese for two days at Chaksam ferry and became the hero of Chaksam. Following the Dalai Lama on his second exile, Chensal Namgang stayed in Darjeeling for two years. Because of his travel outside Tibet in China, Mongolia and India, he was able to communicate in English, Russian, Mongolian and Hindustani. Though he lacked formal education and the quiet and dignified courtesy of the Tibetan nobleman, his personality brought a vigour to the lay nobility which it lacked before. A man of great energy and sound sense, he imbibed modern ideas and a progressive outlook which Tibet sorely needed but could not appreciate and implement. His strongest interest was in increasing the strength of the Tibetan military by raising a disciplined and modern trained Tibetan army that can maintain the independence of Tibet.

In 1912, Chensal Namgang was made the commander-in-Chief of Tibetan army and sent to Lhasa to drive away the Chinese soldiers. Working in close association with the War Department headed by Chamba Tendar and Trimon, Chensal Namgang succeeded in ending the Chinese dictatorship at Lhasa. In the suspicious circumstances of the fighting in Lhasa, further prolonged by Tengyeling monastery's open support of the Chinese garrison, the War Department ordered the arrest and execution of the Tibetan Cabinet members who were judged pro-Chinese for their soft attitude. In this execution, the father and son of the Tsarong family perished. Ironical as it was, Chensal Namgang who knew about the conspiracy to kill the suspected collaborators, could not warn his friend Samdup Tsering and his father Shape Tsarong, as it was a secret political move of the War Department. After the Dalai Lama's triumphant return to Lhasa and the declaration of Tibetan independence, Chensal Namgang was rewarded for his courageous fight with the Chinese at Chaksam ferry by granting him the estate of Lhanga. He was then a handsome, brave, honest and loyal young man who was a foremost favourite of the Dalai Lama. The Tsarong family had suffered the most in the confusion of the 1912 fighting in Lhasa. For no serious fault of their own, both the father and the son had been killed. The Dalai Lama allowed Chensal Namgang to marry into the family of Tsarong. Hence forth, Chensal Namgang was known as Tsarong Dazang Dadul. As the senior commander-in-chief of the Tibetan army, Tsarong Dazang Dadul enjoyed the full confidence of the Dalai Lama. As he was the Dalai Lama's foremost favourite, his prestige and power was unequalled by anyone at that time. No one else but Tsarong was permitted to visit the Dalai Lama in his old white tweed pants and coat, or in khaki uniform of a soldier. During special holidays, when the Dalai Lama enjoyed flying kites, Tsarong

sat ready by his side to run for the kites. But the Chinese presence in eastern Tibet took most of their time. The elder ministers led by Kalon Chamba Tendar were ceaselessly combating the Chinese soldiers and Tsarong, with the encouragement of the Dalai Lama and assistance of Sir Charles Bell, was building the Tibetan military strength.

In 1920, there were only about 6000 soldiers. Though hardy and accustomed to travel and live for many days on a small bag of barley, these soldiers had received no proper military training and remained scattered in different parts of Tibet. They had no artillery. Their rifles were almost primitive mostly manufactured a few miles outside Lhasa. The few British rifles they received were poorly kept. Above all, the prohibition of killing in Buddhism and inherent monastic distrust of the military made the life of Tibetan soldiers difficult. A military career was looked down upon in Tibet. Yet the Dalai Lama was anxious that the newly won independence must be kept and he knew in his heart that only a strong military can keep it intact from the Chinese. Tsarong proposed an increase in the army but the Dalai Lama did not at once accept it. After all, the aristocracy and the monasteries both looked down upon the idea. Sir Charles Bell strongly urged the increase of the military. Even the Gurkha representative in Lhasa, surprisingly, urged that Tibet should increase its army to 30,000 men and send their officers to India for training.

The Dalai Lama made known this proposal to the National Assembly. It was decided to recruit five hundred to a thousand soldiers yearly bringing the total to 17,000 gradually. For this the estates of the monasteries and the nobility were to be taxed and there was general tension and rumour that the monks will be recruited and Buddhism dishonoured. The Dalai Lama decreed that no monks will be permitted to join the army. Still, the general reaction was one of strong dislike and opposition to the idea. Chamon, a leader of Sera monastery told Sir Charles Bell. "This proposal to increase the army is strictly disliked by the monks, who feel that is against the Buddhist religion."

Recruiting soldiers and training them in Lhasa was a problem in itself. To support the soldiers, new sources of revenue had to be found. And modern weapons demanded more money. Above all, Tibetan aristocracy and monastic establishment did not look on Tsarong's idea of strong military force with appreciation. The aristocracy was reluctant to support it as it called forth a male member of the family besides an increasing revenue. The monastic establishment saw in the growing military strength the death of their hold on the political pulse of the Tibetan government. But Tsarong forged ahead and soon the military strength started soaring. Side by side with his military duties, Tsarong had also imported machines that enabled the Dalai Lama to introduce paper currency. He also established a tea plantation in southern Tibet which was successfully managed by his soldiers. At his and Sir Charles Bell's suggestion, the Dalai Lama agreed to establish an English school in Lhasa. But opposition from the monastic establishment forced the school to Gyantse where it was closed down after a few years. Some years before in 1913, four students were selected for study in England. With them went Lungshar Dorjee Tsegial, a 5th rank official as their guardian. Tsarong's son and other children of progressive noble families were already attending English schools in Darjeeling.

The Tibetan soldiers were then trained on British lines and promising youths were sent to Shillong and Quetta for further military training. As the senior commander-in-chief

of the Tibetan army, Tsarong stationed a military guard at Tsarong House and gradually took the responsibility of deciding crucial matters of army discipline. An unfortunate incident occurred around 1917. A few Tibetan soldiers murdered one of their junior officers. Discipline was the backbone of the army and Tsarong at once ordered thorough investigations. When two of the culprits were found guilty, he shot them in the midst of people without any hesitation. As the Dalai Lama had decreed the abolition of capital punishment, Tsarong's decisive disciplinary action came as a rude shock and high-handedness to many. As the military steadily gained its strength, constantly supplying soldiers that were needed in eastern Tibet to defend the borders against Chinese incursions, the monastic reaction became bitter against Tsarong and even Sir Charles Bell and Kennedy, the two British officials then in Lhasa. During Monlam festival of 1922, when fifty to sixty thousand monks were in Lhasa, people begin to fear a clash between the soldiers and the monks. Many were hiding their properties. The monks turned aggressive and demanded to know who brought the British to Lhasa. Some placards urging to kill Sir Charles Bell and Kennedy were put up during the night. Groups of monks paraded the streets of Lhasa shouting slogans against Tsarong and the British visitors. Tsarong was now becoming unpopular. His life was often threatened. The windows of his house in Lhasa were broken by the monks who constantly demanded his resignation from the post of commander-in-chief and the cabinet. Tsarong knew the mood of the monastic establishment was against him. Therefore, he submitted his application for resignation directly to the Dalai Lama in which he said: "I am a man of the common people, I am not a member of the aristocracy. I am a man without learning. Thus I am unable to render good service. I therefore beg to be relieved of my three posts. If not all of three, then of two. If not even of two, then at any rate one." Tsarong was then a member of the Cabinet, Commander-in-chief and Master of the Mint. The Dalai Lama referred his application to the cabinet for their opinion. They refused to accept Tsarong's resignation for the third time.

The Tibetan military had undoubtedly become strong. But it was yet to gain respect and acceptance by the conservative society in which it functioned. Unfortunately, the elder generals were busy fighting the Chinese in eastern Tibet and the younger generals, trained in Gyantse and India tended to show off their progressive outlook a bit too much to the annoyance of the elder ministers. Soon rumours developed that civilian and military officials disagreed with each other. This was soon confirmed when the Financial commissioners deliberately kept out the military members from a meeting of National Assembly whose sole purpose was to discuss the disbandment of an extra revenue raised by the military authorities. Not being able to get over this insult, the young generals led by Tsarong gate-crashed the meeting and quarreled with one of the Financial commissioners. During this scene, Tsarong demanded a military representative in the National Assembly. As it was an unheard of demand, Lungshar, the upcoming favourite of the Dalai Lama and president of National Assembly, secretly encouraged the monks to defy Tsarong's demand and make an issue out of it. Rumours spread like wild fire that Tsarong was on the verge of introducing a military government that will take the whole government under its control. At Lungshar's instigation, monks in thousand marched out to guard the Norbu lingka and Potala palaces ostensibly to prevent a military take-over. None but Lungshar could have set this tense scene in Lhasa. The generals, including Tsarong were left stranded

and shocked by the changes of the situation. More in surprise and panic than by any motive of a military take-over, Tsarong issued a hundred rounds of ammunition to the soldiers. Whole Lhasa was excited by this near confrontation of soldiers and monks. But nothing happened. The Dalai Lama was perturbed by this incident, and intervened directly in the dispute. The military was blamed and accused for unlawfully disturbing the session of the National Assembly. Two generals, Dapon Shazur and Dapon Tsogo were dismissed. A cabinet minister Kalon Kunsangtse was also dismissed. The monasteries were also warned to keep their monks under control or else the Dalai Lama would be severe with them. A calm was restored. Tsarong was becoming increasingly unpopular. A street song on this event said:

Oh! Cabinet ministers in session
 What plans do they have?
 They fail to cut out the root
 And only succeed in peeling the branches!

The song implies that Tsarong – the root should be eliminated and not the younger generals who are mere branches. According to those that have been close to him, Tsarong was never a revengeful or opportunistic man. He was honest and farsighted. Above all, he was loyal to the Dalai Lama and Tibet. But incidents and his independent nature were to go against him. In 1923, the newly organised Tibetan police force clashed with an army garrison. Soon both sides started firing on each other. As the commander-in-chief, Tsarong put a stop to the fight and had the leg of the army instigator cut off. The other offenders had their ears cut off. This not only shocked Lhasa but annoyed the Dalai Lama who detected a strong streak of high-handedness in Tsarong. As Tsarong became more unpopular Lungshar gained more prominence. The rumour of Tsarong's military takeover did not subside in Lhasa. The Dalai Lama sent Tsarong to inspect the National mint at Dromo because of the unfavourable situation in Lhasa. From there, Tsarong and his wife Pema Dolkar decided on a pilgrimage of India and Nepal. They arrived in Darjeeling during the winter of 1924 and visited Calcutta, Bombay, Bodh Gaya, Benaras, Kushinagar, Kathmandu. Everywhere, the British Indian Government showed him and his retinue the respect due to the commander-in-chief of Tibet. In Nepal, the Maharaja, Padma Shamsheer, sent his son and grandson to call on Tsarong. On his return journey, he was greeted at every stop. At Gyantse, Mr. Frank Ludlow, the Headmaster of the English school for Tibetan boys opened in 1923, had his students lined up to greet and welcome Tsarong.

But in Lhasa, the rumours of a military take-over supposedly master-minded by Tsarong once again came in street whispers and conversations. At Chushul – only a day's ride from Lhasa – a rude shock and disappointment awaited the Chaksam hero. A special messenger arrived to deliver a letter from the Kashag which read: "By order of His Holiness the Dalai Lama we have decided that the second-in-command, Dzasa Dumpa, can carry on the work of the Army headquarters as there is no anxiety in the country at the moment, so we need not a commander-in-chief". Tsarong took the demotion in his dignified stride and returned to Lhasa. At once, he realised that his absence had cost him his post as his enemies had been active in their plot to degrade him. In his absence, all the younger officers loyal to him had been removed from the army for irrelevant and nonsensical reasons. General Dingja, Doring and Samdup

Phodrang who had been trained in Shillong and Quetta were demoted for cutting their hair short during their training outside Tibet. Such were the ploys which were used to cut the very root of Tsarong's base in the military set-up. It was also said that his enemies had appealed the Dalai Lama to remove Tsarong from the Kashag and confiscate his properties. But the Dalai Lama, despite his suspicion of Tsarong's growing military strength and independent actions, always maintained his gratitude to the Chaksam hero who had once defended and saved him from the Chinese clutch. After his arrival in Lhasa, he was granted a private audience of the Dalai Lama. He left the new Tsarong house, built in 1923 which malignant gossip said was finer than the Norbu Lingka palace, in the morning and returned after a long conversation with the Dalai Lama at about 10 in the night. Once again, people thought Tsarong was back in favour. But this was to be his last private audience with the Dalai Lama for a long time. After this, Tsarong never went up to sit beside the Dalai Lama in the pavilion during public ceremonies but stayed in the Cabinet tent with other members. Gradually Tsarong was drifting away from the Tibetan political scene.

As a matter of fact, Tsarong could not have survived in the political jungle of Lhasa infested by the most unscrupulous and ambitious minds of the Tibetan aristocracy and monastic powers. Tsarong's main fault was his class. He was neither of the lay nobility nor of the powerful priesthood. He was a common Tibetan who was graced with the favour of the Dalai Lama due to his cleverness and courage. Having stayed in Urga, Peking and India at various stages of his life and having actively challenged the Chinese in mortal combat, he had more experience and shared a broader outlook than many of his contemporaries. His one aim was a gradual modernisation of Tibet with the help of a strong military. Inspired and encouraged by the Dalai Lama, he embarked on his modernising mission but was soon blocked by the solid conservatism of the monasteries and the aristocracy. As the commander-in-chief of the Tibetan army, he often freed the Dalai Lama from the difficult situation of taking decisions connected with the discipline of the army. In this, he was too independent for his time. Even the Dalai Lama was shocked and annoyed. But Tsarong had his reasons. After his dismissal from the army, the Dalai Lama asked why he had shot and amputated men when Tibetan law forbids such punishments and why he kept a military guard at Tsarong house, a privilege reserved only for the Dalai Lama? Tsarong replied that as commander-in-chief of the Tibetan army, he felt it his duty to maintain the discipline of the army rather than refer such awkward questions to the Dalai Lama – the most spiritual institution of Tibet. The military guard at Tsarong House, he explained, was an honour not to an individual but to the commander-in-chief of the Tibetan army. But the real cause of Tsarong's downfall was not so much the monastic anger against his military modernisation and the jealousy of the lay nobility against his extensive influence and growing power or even the Dalai Lama's nascent suspicion of his independent action as the head of the military. Behind all these potential cause of Tsarong's downfall stood the diabolical genius of a self seeking and extremely brilliant Tibetan mind whose sole aim in Tibetan politics was to grasp the whole power in his hands to crush those that opposed and reward those that bowed. Such a personality is rare in Tibetan history. And he was Lungshar Dorjee Tsegyal – already an established favourite of the Dalai Lama and the dominating voice in the *Tsongdu* deliberations that carried the National Assembly in the direction it wanted. Against Lungshar, Tsarong nor any one else had much chance. Whereas Tsarong was honest and

forthright, Lungshar was scheming and self-seeking. He analysed and studied the mood of the time to jump at any opportunity to discredit or topple his enemy. In this, he was always successful leaving everyone aghast. And he never defied the monasteries nor did anything to annoy them. He knew the power of the monasteries and used the monks to achieve his selfish ends with perfect timing and total effect.

After Tsarong's dismissal Dumpa Dzasa was appointed the commander-in-chief. He was a nephew of the Dalai Lama and Lungshar used him to fill the Dalai Lama's mind with doubt and suspicion against Tsarong. It is said Dumpa Dzasa shed tears before the Dalai Lama degrading and accusing Tsarong with the ambition of a military take-over. And the Dalai Lama, well aware of how Miwang Pholanay overshadowed the 7th Dalai Lama, may have actually feared and suspected Tsarong. But Dumpa Dzasa himself was a weak man, addicted to opium and incapable of managing the army. Perhaps it suited Lungshar's plan of a weak commander-in-chief who can not thwart his plan. Together, Dumpa Dzasa and Lungshar succeeded in degrading Tsarong by removing him from his powerful post. But unlike Lungshar, Tsarong did not have the wild drive for power. In his political wilderness, Tsarong remained a dignified personality and a jovial host of the many foreigners that visited Lhasa from time to time. Privately he may have resented the injustice which he had suffered but to his credit, he never shouted in public nor resorted to political intrigue or military conspiracy to regain his lost power.

Lungshar was born in 1881 in Tsang Tanag to a poor noble family. But he was a brilliant and ambitious man who made his way to Lhasa for a job in the government. In December 1912, he was a humble 5th rank official working in the office of the Accountant General (*tsi-khang*) at Lhasa. Very soon after, the Dalai Lama appointed him to go to England with the four boys selected for modern education. Before leaving, he was promoted to the 4th rank. Lungshar was elated with the unexpected promotion and regarded himself in the light of a plenipotentiary entrusted with an important diplomatic mission. This irritated his British associates, who were disturbed by Lungshar's disposition to intrigue. Along with the four boys, Lungshar had brought his wife and two servants. They were travelling under the charge of Mr. B. J. Gould and Mr. Laden la. At Calcutta, the Chinese representatives contacted Lungshar who made a faint attempt to divert the boys to China. From intercepted telegrams, it appeared that the Chinese minister in London was instructed to keep the Tibetan party under close observation. Gould's telegram dated 9th April, 1913 records: "The government of India are, I believe, in possession of information which shows that Kusho Lungshar engaged actively in intrigue with representatives, official and unofficial, of foreign powers while he was in India, and there is I believe, evidence that the Japanese would have been glad to secure the boys now in my charge for education in Japan. It will not be easy to control the movements of Kusho Lungshar when he is in England and it is possible that he will attempt to prosecute intrigues in that country. It is, therefore, I venture to think, politically desirable that he should be recalled to Tibet as soon as possible". Reaching England in June 1913 by sea from Bombay, Lungshar and the party were received in audience by King George V and Queen Mary, to whom the letters and presents of the Dalai Lama were presented. The party spent some time in London and Aldershot. While in England, Lungshar took the opportunity to visit France, Germany and Holland and Belgium. On 21st September, 1913 Lonchen Shatra, the Prime Minister of Tibet, instructed Lungshar to pay £350 to

the British government on account of the passage from India to England of the Tibetan party. But Lungshar failed to comply with the Prime Minister's instruction owing to the lack of funds. From an India Office minute dated 19th September, compiled by Mr. J. E. Shukburgh it is stated: "I understand that Lungshar who brought with him about £400-500 in gold bars has spent a good deal of money in England and on his recent continental trip and is unlikely to be able to meet this bill for about £350". After more than a year's stay in England, Lungshar returned to Tibet in September 1914 with letter and presents from the British Crown to the Dalai Lama. His report of the Tibetan students progress in England and general observations about Europe and their political systems must have impressed the Dalai Lama whose main concern after the recent declaration of Tibetan independence was its modernisation in every sphere. Soon afterwards, Lungshar was appointed a Minister of Finance.

Lungshar spoke a little English and sometimes wore a suit and a tie. The increasing military strength and training system called forth new sources of revenue. An office to revise the taxation and revenue system was created. Lungshar was one of its foremost champions. His main idea was to base the revenue in proportion to the size of the estates. With this idea, he visited Shigatse to adjust the financial and revenue arrangements between Tashi Lhunpo and Lhasa in 1919. His investigation of the revenue lapses of Tashi Lhunpo was thorough and meticulous. His report and recommendation to the government on his findings was straight and severe. The day the Lhasa government took their first step on Lungshar's recommendation was to open one of the saddest chapters in the history of modern Tibet. It led to the frightened flight of the humble and serene Panchen Lama to China in 1923.

The opium addict Dumpa Dzasa, the commander-in-chief was slack and inefficient. The Dalai Lama, disgusted with Dzasa, not only relieved him from his post but dismissed him altogether from the official group. In April 1929, Lungshar was appointed to the post. As the commander-in-chief and Financial minister of the Tibetan Government, Lungshar had reached the zenith of his power. Yet he was to pursue power with vehemence, plotting the downfall of his opponents with skill and sorcery.

As the commander-in-chief, he relaxed the discipline of the Tibetan army and increased their pay and rations. He did not forget the monasteries to whom he constantly offered gifts. This made him popular with both the army and the monasteries. But he remained extremely unpopular within the aristocracy. He was the favourite of the Dalai Lama. He commanded the Army and the Finance. Drunk with such power and influence he became callous and high-handed. Many of the lay officials had their estates confiscated right and left under Lungshar's direction. But for the time being, no one in Lhasa dared to openly oppose Lungshar. The aristocracy, accustomed to such abuse of power and prestige by the corrupt ones like Lungshar was willing to wait for the day when they can give the dog a bad name and hang him.

In 1929, Lungshar's recklessness almost brought Tibet to war with Nepal over a very ordinary incident involving a Tibetan subject named Gyalpo married to a Sherpa girl who sold opium and liquor in his Lhasa shop named "Sherpa Gyalpo". As the Dalai Lama had banned such items, the Lhasa magistrates decided to arrest Gyalpo who sought asylum in the residence of the Gurkha representative. Things would have died down, but for Lungshar, who sent his troops into the Gurkha representative's residence to arrest the prisoner. This was against the rights granted to the Gurkha representative under the Treaty of 1856. Rumours of Gurkha soldiers marching

against Tibet reached Lhasa and the Tibetan government prepared a few garrisons and despatched them to Shigatse. This crisis was brought on purely by the obstinacy of Lungshar but unfortunately Tsarong was to suffer a part of the consequence because of his friendship with the Gurkha government whose king he visited during his pilgrimage in 1924. As such, Tsarong went more out of favour with the Dalai Lama and was suddenly demoted from the post of a *Shape* – cabinet minister. Henceforth, Tsarong was merely a *Dzasa*.

Hardly had the cunning Lungshar taken a breath of fresh air in the volatile Lhasa establishment by acquiring the most important and powerful posts, his position appeared shaky and insecure. In the entourage of the Dalai Lama, a new star was rising. His name was Kuchar Thupten Kunphela. Like Tsarong, he was born to a poor peasant family. But unlike Tsarong, he was a monk – always present to attend on the Dalai Lama. Lungshar hated him as both their position and prestige survived on the favour of the Dalai Lama. But against Kuchar Kunphela, Lungshar's competition seemed futile if not suicidal.

Kunphela, it is said, would have become a good statesman had he received a good education. He was an intelligent boy from a peasant family whose work was carving wood-blocks, for printing religious books, at Norbu Lingka. In 1925, when Tsarong fell from favour and stopped attending daily on the Dalai Lama, Kunphela started to attend on the Dalai Lama. Without any official standing or rank, Kunphela soon became a source of power and influence. Lungshar had plotted his way up to the commander-in-chief with brilliant and often unscrupulous and dishonest strokes. Kunphela had power and influence thrust upon him in an unexpected and almost accidental way. Having tasted power, both became ambitious. In the narrow corridors of Lhasa politics, they had to clash. It was only a matter of time.

After Tsarong's dismissal from the Cabinet, the Dalai Lama combined the mint, paper currency factory and the ammunition factory under one department called Drapchi Lekhung. He appointed Kunphela as its head assisted by Tsarong whose vast experience in Tibetan affairs commanded respect and recognition. This department steadily improved the quality of paper currency, imported ammunition and started electrifying Lhasa with the help of Ringang, one of the four boys, trained in England.

For Lungshar, Kunphela was almost a thorn in the throat. To crush Kunphela, he had to maintain his power, both in the military and civilian side. But his extreme partiality of defending his friends and high-handedness in degrading and demoting his foes had earned him such widespread unpopularity that very soon, the Dalai Lama relieved him from the post of commander-in-chief and conferred it on Kunphela. This was a severe blow to Lungshar who was left only with his civilian role.

Kunphela was now the real strong man of Lhasa. He controlled the military, mint, and the factories. With him, even the Kashag members had to be careful. The Dalai Lama favoured him strongly. Kunphela on his part was a devoted and dedicated man who, without a family or property to look after, directed his whole efforts towards the improvement of the administration. In Lhasa, Kunphela drove around in one of Dalai Lama's two private cars. It was an Austin A-40. When Kunphela drove around in Lhasa, it created quite a sensation. Everywhere, people crowded to see him. Unlike Lungshar, Kunphela was not unkind towards Tsarong whose great experience and foresight in Tibetan politics he admired and respected. Often he sought advice and

suggestions which Tsarong readily gave. Together they made the Drapchi Lekhung a model of success.

The Dalai Lama, overworked and strained by the administrative problems, was increasingly depending on Kunphela whom he trusted and favoured rather too highly now.

Williamson, the Political Officer of Sikkim, made this observation during an official reception at Norbu Lingka:

“The Dalai Lama was attended with tea on the dais by Kusho Kuhphel La, a tall rather good-looking young man of 28. He is, next to the Dalai Lama, undoubtedly the most powerful person in Tibet. He holds no official rank, but is always in personal attendance on the Dalai Lama who is very fond of him and treats him like a son. He has immense influence over the Dalai Lama. . . . He is extremely clever and intelligent and his talents would bring him to the fore anywhere.”

Kunphela's word became law and even the Kashag fully agreed with Kunphela on every matter, without raising a single question or voice in dissent. But Kunphela was not as high-handed or unjust as his power would entitle him to be. Though occasionally unpredictable and severe as when he dismissed a cabinet minister and several high ranking officials for inefficient handling of some renovation and construction work at the Potala and confiscated all their possessions, Kunphela did not seek thorough vengeance on his enemies as did Lungshar. He appointed two of Lungshar's own sons as ranking officers of the Dalai Lama's bodyguards although mutual tension and jealousy marked his relationship with their father. As the supreme favourite of the Dalai Lama he was said to have faithfully carried out the Dalai Lama's orders and wishes without any partiality. Nor did he try to play his role safe by aligning himself with a stronger party against another.

In 1931, Tibetan soldiers in eastern Tibet were able to drive the Chinese soldiers as far as Draggo but by 1932, the reinforced Chinese soldiers were steadily driving the Tibetans back and threatening the capture of Chamdo. In Lhasa, the Dalai Lama dispatched troops after troops to repulse the Chinese and strengthen the Tibetan control in the region. In consultation with the Dalai Lama, Kuchar Thupten Kunphela embarked on recruiting the sons of the rich peasant families and the nobility into a special regiment called the Drong Drak Magar: *the Garrison of the Better Families*. There were about one thousand selected soldiers in this special regiment, housed in Drapchi. Yuthok and Jigme Taring who had received military training in Gyantse were appointed its senior and junior captains. Ngawang Jigme, later known as Ngapo, was also recruited in this regiment. Dapon Yuthok was responsible for recruitment and Dapon Taring for training especially in the use of machine guns under the overall supervision of Kuchar Kunphela. Though Kunphela never admitted that Drong Drak Magar was his political party which would keep him in power, his care and special treatment of this regiment left no doubt that it was to fulfil a special need which Kunphela must have foreseen. In the uncertain and blood thirsty arena of Lhasa politics where political hunters brought about the unexpected downfall of unsuspecting victims with the force and fury of fierce and angry hounds, Kunphela must have longed for a political base that will brave his storms and shield him from the clutch of the hunters and power hungry hounds. He fed his soldiers well. Gave them well tailored and good quality uniforms. He personally paid for the gold badges of the Dapons and ordered full British uniforms for the officers from Calcutta. Often delicious

dried Yak meats were brought for the soldiers from Norbu Lingka. Though their pay was equal to that of the other soldiers, it was a special regiment of a special man. But unknown to Kunphela himself yet clear to others was the fact that the Drong Drak Magar was a colossal mistake. It made many unhappy and most of all the soldiers and the officers themselves. Being the sons of rich and well-to-do families and the nobility, they took no joy in joining the Army. Many, it is said, cried like babies when their hairs were cut for recruitment in this special regiment.

Street songs on the *Drong drak* regiment said:

Harsh orders of the Lord
Has forced me into *Drong drak* regiment
My hair, beautiful like flowers,
Has been cut as if it is willow.

and

Chensal Kunphela, the “favourite”
needs *Drong drak* regiment
We know not how long it will last
But for now, we have no choice
but to stay in the regiment. . . .

Kunphela was powerful and his influence was harsh. Therefore, many unwilling families reluctantly sent their unhappy sons to Drong Drak regiment. And once when an officer had the boldness to complain about the injustice of such compulsory recruitment, Kunphela had him lashed. No one really liked to be in Drong Drak Magar. Yet no one could escape it except by bribing or playing up to one of Kunphela’s numerous favourites. Such a regiment, despite all its special privileges lacked the backbone to be a strong army or an effective political base. Instead of a strong ally who can withstand his adversaries, Kunphela had succeeded in building with great care and severity an extremely vulnerable conclave of young soldiers ready to desert their post and return home at the slightest excuse and provocation. With Lungshar standing by, looking for a chance to topple Kunphela whom he regarded responsible for his gradual downfall from the military power and the Dalai Lama’s favour, Drong Drak Magar and its unhappy soldiers seemed to be the weak link in the chain of Kunphela’s power and prestige. This weak link cracked and the crack widened when the Dalai Lama suddenly passed away under the strict and secret care of Kunphela. Many in Lhasa were dazed and surprised as few knew that the Dalai Lama was seriously ill. Leaving aside everything everyone went into mourning. The saddest and the most shocked must have been Kunphela himself. He knew he had come to the end of his political career. He turned over the keys and resigned his office though many important officials and the Prime Minister persuaded him to remain in office and dined with him as an expression of their appreciation of his services to the Government. But premonition must have warned Kunphela that his days were now over. As the grief and mourning mixed with the undercurrent of incertitude and panic prevailed in Lhasa at the demise of the Dalai Lama, Lungshar was sharpening his scimitar of vengeance against Kunphela. Tsarong was away from Lhasa and the scene of dirty politics that was to follow. On the fourth day after the demise of the Dalai Lama, all the government officials and the three abbots of the three major monasteries assembled to discuss

administrative matters relating to the choice of a regent who must fill the interregnum before the reincarnation of the Dalai Lama is discovered. In keeping with historical tradition, the abbots of the three major monasteries opined that a reincarnated Lama should be elected to the regency. Most officials agreed with this suggestion. A few suggested that Prime Minister Langdun with a monk and lay associate should be bestowed the regency. Quite a strong section of the lay officials advocated Kunphela as the administrator. While practically the whole government was involved in this important administrative discussion, the impatient soldiers of Drong Drak Magar came marching to demonstrate before Norbu Lingka palace demanding their disbandment. Kunphela's backbone was being crushed. The tempting whispers of Lungshar telling the soldiers that the right time has come to resign from the special regiment had its effect. Deliberately misled by a few officers, the whole regiment, instead of mourning the death of the Dalai Lama, went to demonstrate in front of the Norbu Lingka. Breaking the important session of selecting the regent, the Kashag came out to quell the demonstrators ordering them to disperse and report back to their duty of guarding the mint and the ammunition factories. But instead of obeying the orders of the Kashag, the soldiers whom Kunphela had trained and brought up with such care and lavish facilities, returned to Lhasa. This miserable conduct of the Drong Drak Magar and their officers at this critical juncture disappointed those that supported Kunphela in the session underway, hoping to make him the administrator. Their voice died down as if strangled suddenly by a sharp twist of fate and the field was open for Lungshar whose burning desire of the moment was to degrade and topple Kunphela. Taking the session under his control, Lungshar with his skill for demagoguery and forceful persuasiveness – influenced the abbots to demand that the deserters of the Drong Drak Magar be replaced by the monks who will guard the mint and the ammunition factory. The implication behind this suggestion was clear. The monasteries, the traditional rival of the aristocracy, were going to exercise a stronger influence in the coming events. But Kalon Trimon, the veteran of the 1912 War Department, rose to the occasion and rebuffed that the Kashag can not allow such an unwise and unnecessary step of monks doing the duties of soldiers and pronounced that the Dalai Lama's bodyguards will guard the mint and ordered them to shoot anyone who obstructs them from guarding the mint. This was a set-back for Lungshar but he had more cards up his sleeve. Plotting actively with his supporters, Lungshar quickly drew up charges that hit Kunphela where it most pained. In his petition to the Cabinet and the Assembly, he asked for an investigation into the circumstances that led to the demise of the Dalai Lama hinting that the Dalai Lama's sudden death, without any previous signs of sickness, came as a sad and mysterious blow to the people. Lungshar suggested that an investigation would reveal a very convincing and objective record of the circumstances that led to the death of the Dalai Lama. The Lhasa air became thick with various rumours of poisoning and black-magic. None but Lungshar could have conjured up such an atmosphere. Into this medieval drama, he introduced the first dose of a modern political idea. Being out of favour with the Kashag responsible for the daily administrative affairs, Lungshar suggested that the investigation should be headed by the Assembly, the body which in theory represented the Tibetan public opinion, but in practice was controlled by himself, shielded by the abbots of the monasteries. Accordingly the investigations were carried on.

Kunphela and his associates including the medium of Nechung oracle and the physician of the Dalai Lama Jampa Yeshe were interrogated. Once the investigations were concluded under the instigation of Lungshar, Kunphela, his father and friends were arrested and imprisoned. Lungshar sought to inflict either death or mutilation on Kunphela. In this, he remained unsuccessful as Kunphela's popularity drew many sympathisers from both the monasteries and the lay section of society. It was then decided to exile Kunphela to Demo Chabnag in Kongpo. His property was confiscated. Lungshar, the head of the Assembly was once again at the peak of power. Behind him stood the solid block of the three monasteries whose abbots supported his idea of subordinating the Kashag under the Assembly. Soon the Kashag had subjugated itself before the Assembly. Kunphela was degraded. During the investigations, he was made to stand and later kneel before the Commission. Soon after he was imprisoned in Sharchenchok and then accordingly exiled mainly by the manipulation of Lungshar but the decree confirming the crime and punishment of Kunphela was issued by the Prime Minister Langdun and the Kashag.

Street songs then said:-

Kuchar (Kunphela) is meditating
in Sharchenchok (the prison)
His car is in Norbu Lingka (the palace)
eating grass

After his exile, another song asked:-

That all powerful person
Who drives the British car,
That "favourite" son of the gods,
Please tell us where has he gone?

The Assembly was now all powerful. As an instrument of Lungshar's political ambition, he wanted to shape it into a concrete platform to support him in reducing the Kashag to virtual ineffectiveness. The abbots gave Lungshar a large measure of support at this critical time though it is unclear whether they were spellbound by Lungshar's political strategies or deliberately supported him to use him to further their own political ends. Anyway, the Assembly selected to the regency a young reincarnation from Radreng Monastery. In the beginning of 1934, Radreng Rinpoche, little over twenty years of age and quite inexperienced in matters of state, was installed to the throne. Prime Minister Langdun was retained to serve as his associate. The regent was young and inexperienced. Langdun, the Prime Minister was a gentle person who lacked the inclination for serious involvement in politics. Perhaps, it suited Lungshar and his Assembly to conduct the administration as they wished.

Since the demise of the Dalai Lama, Lungshar's manipulation and achievement was impressive. He had degraded and exiled Kunphela. Disbanded the *Dron Drak Magar* and subordinated the Kashag to the Assembly of which he was the most influential speaker. His main support came from the abbot of the three monasteries whose monks he hoped will replace the soldiers of *Dron Drak Magar*. In this he remained unsuccessful as he was thwarted by Kalon Trimon. Somehow Lungshar had to do

something to get rid of the Cabinet Ministers whose conservative, cautious and unimpressive Kashag thwarted his ambition to achieve total power.

In 1934, Lungshar founded a secret party. He called it *Kyichog Kunthun* (Harmonious Union). At first, it was small and held secret meetings. They sent out appeals to recruit new members. Many junior officials, mostly unhappy, dissatisfied and hungry for changes signed up. Some of the members were learned and brilliant while others were opportunistic and treacherous. One such member to sign up was Kapshodpa Chogyal Nyima. As the *Kyichog Kunthun*, Lungshar's replica of Kunphela's *Drong Drak Magar*, increased in strength, they held their meetings openly and in general gave the impression of an active political organisation which worked feverishly in fulfilling its aims. Lungshar was talking in terms of a republic in which the Assembly, under his leadership, will speak on behalf of the country. At the same time, Lungshar adopted a very anti-Chinese foreign policy. His behaviour towards the Chinese government was independent, haughty and often hostile. His anti-Chinese policy was partly due to the controversy over the return of the Panchen Lama whom the Chinese wanted to escort to Lhasa with 300 soldiers. To this Chinese initiative, everyone in Lhasa was opposed but more so Lungshar since he was mainly responsible for the flight of the Panchen Lama in 1923. Lungshar took no joy in the expected return of the Panchen Lama whom he had enough reasons to fear. Lungshar, therefore, contacted the British telling them to pay attention towards the strong Chinese request to accept a Chinese representative in Lhasa to conduct negotiations which will certainly be accepted just after the death of the Dalai Lama. A telegram was sent to Chiang-kai-shek and the Chinese government at Lungshar's initiative, informing them that all the matters relating to Tibet in China may be referred to the Tibetan representative in Nanking as the Prime Minister and the Kashag were conducting state business. The Chinese government was warned in clear terms that if anything were done through the influence of persons, who wanted to create trouble between the two countries, such action would never be tolerated even if Tibet were reduced to the last man. This was a veiled warning to the Panchen Lama's entourage and their politicking with the Chinese government. To the British officers, Lungshar's stand came as a surprise. As the commander-in-chief of Tibet and adviser of the Dalai Lama, Lungshar's ascendancy coincided with the sharp turn away from modernisation and British connection with Lhasa. Meanwhile, Lungshar's idea of a republic was creating doubts in the minds of many. The monasteries began to wonder about the role of religion and monastic establishment in a republic. They began to wonder if Lungshar, a layman was not using them to get more power for himself. On the other hand, serious doubts began to appear in the Kashag whether Lungshar was being used to subordinate them by the monastic leaders. Unfortunately, Kashag did not have a leader so forceful as Lungshar. Their main figure was Kalon Trimon. He was a colleague of the courageous Chamba Tender in the War Department which drove the Chinese away from Central Tibet in 1912. He also accompanied Kalon Shatra to the Simla Convention of 1914 and was rewarded by the Dalai Lama for his meticulous documentation of the proceedings of that convention. Lungshar hated him strongly. But Trimon was a conservative who was cautious and did not budge unless necessary.

Lungshar's party, after days and nights of feverish meetings and discussions drew up a petition which they presented to the government. In it, many reforms in the administration were suggested. The most crucial was the demand to have officials

selected directly by the people. This was anathema to the aristocracy whose very life blood was its hereditary privileges. It seemed that even within the *Kyichog Kunthun* itself, there was a secret inner chamber whose members discussed the real and confidential scheme of Lungshar's party. And Napshodpa Chogyal Nyima was a confidential member of this secret inner circle.

The Prime Minister and the Kashag consulted the regent Radreng Rinpoche on this petition. As they did not have an exact idea of the real strength of Lungshar's party and could not guess the reaction of the three monasteries on the issue, they were thrown into a state of fear. In the midst of this fear and chaos, Kapshodpa warned Kalon Trimon that Lungshar was plotting to kill him and the other members of Kashag. Kalon Trimon escaped to Drepung and sought asylum there. To his relief and surprise, Trimon realised that the monastery no longer showed any sympathy for Lungshar. From Drepung, he contacted the other two monasteries and thoroughly explained to them that if Lungshar's idea of a republic came into existence, both the Buddhist tradition and the monasteries will suffer. The Dalai Lama's *Last Political Testament* dangled before their eyes. To overcome such dangers, the three monasteries pledged their support to Kashag. Kalon Trimon was now confident that Lungshar had come to the end of his road.

On 10th May, the undercurrents of panic and tension created in Lhasa by the secretive events came to a point of crisis. The Regent, Prime Minister and the Kashag summoned Lungshar to the Potala. An unsuspecting Lungshar walked into Potala with some armed servants. The regent questioned him in front of the government officials present. Lungshar began to suspect betrayal and ran for the door. One of the giant monk door keepers caught him. His armed servants ran away without even an attempt to rescue him. As a sign of dismissal and degradation, his official dress was torn off. When his boots were pulled off, some pieces of paper fell out. One such piece was swallowed by Lungshar immediately. The other piece was snatched by his captors. On it was written the name of Kalon Trimon. The other piece was presumed to contain the names of the Prime Minister and the regent. Apparently, Lungshar had engaged in his favourite pastime of sorcery to get rid of his enemies. But for once, Lungshar – blinded by his ambition and overconfident of his party, had betrayed himself. Rimshi Kapshodpa was also taken into custody as a ploy to extort incriminating confessions against Lungshar. The remaining members of Lungshar's *Kyichog Kunthun* held a secret meeting and approached the monasteries for assistance to solve the crisis. The monasteries did not show any strong interest of support but agreed to send a deputation of senior monks to request the regent and the Prime Minister for Lungshar's release. But when the Prime Minister and the regent explained in detail the apparently criminal designs of Lungshar behind his slogan for a republic, the deputation of senior monks unanimously condemned Lungshar and agreed with the government that such a man was not worthy of support. Lungshar's fate seemed sealed. But worse was to follow.

The day after Lungshar's arrest, the Kashag, fully confident of the monastic support so far denied to them by Lungshar, arrested eight of the most prominent members. This arrest intimidated the other members who cared more for their personal safety rather than the political ideals to which they have been introduced by Lungshar. The party disappeared like drops of rain falling on sands. From the confession extorted Kapshodpa accused Lungshar, with documentary evidence of forging a plot

to murder Kalon Lama Gedun Chodar and Kalon Trimon, to procure complete political power. Other confessions disclosed that Lungshar was to have been made the colleague of the regent and perhaps even the king of Tibet. The secret inner chamber of this party was to plot the murder of a number of senior lay officers and debts owed to the Tibetan government by many of Lungshar's party members and supporters were to be cancelled null and void on the dawn of their victory when a Tibetan People's Republic was to be announced.

Lungshar's crimes were listed. The regent Radreng Rinpoche, unwilling to condemn Lungshar to death as capital punishment had been abolished by the late Dalai Lama, referred the sentence to the National Assembly. Though Lungshar had dominated this body for long, his harsh and high-handed conduct from the day he was appointed a Tsipon in 1919 as a rising favourite of the late Dalai Lama, had earned him a large section of silent enemies who eagerly awaited his end. To his enemies, the day had now come to give the dog a bad name and hang him. When it was suggested that Lungshar's eyes should be gouged out, it was unanimously supported. And for Lungshar, a lonely pseudo-revolutionary whose attempt at some form of democracy was crushed both by his own self-seeking methods and the conservative weight of his society, darkness surrounded him forever as he was given a strong toxic before he was blinded.

The cautious Kashag, perhaps fearing to try too far the remaining dissident elements at large in Lhasa, used their success over Lungshar's conspiracy with tact and moderation. Only eight of the most prominent members were banished. They were Changlochen Gung Sonam Gyalpo, Kusung Rupon Chapase, Sherpang Gyalkhar Nangpa, Shod-drung Drakthonpa Dorjee Rigzin, Shod-drung Manriwa, Tsedrong Letsen Kyidtodpa, Chakpe Dodam Thupten Delek and Yulha Tenpa Tsewang. Other members were subjected to minor fines {and} within months the whole atmosphere of panic and political instability died down. Out of this short and exciting period of dissent and confusion emerged an unimpressive and mutilated government that was to waste itself dry under the rule of the regents. Lungshar, despite his criminal or revolutionary designs, remains a controversial figure of Tibetan history. The Lhasa street singers sang:

Kapshodpa, the white cock
Crowed too early
Lungshar, like *Drimed Kunden*
Had to give his eyes in alms.

This song which compares Lungshar to *Drimed Kunden*, the hero of an extremely popular opera who gives even his eyes in alms out of compassion for suffering humanity, establishes evenly the popular base of his movement. Many member of his *Kyichog Kunthun* were intelligent Tibetans aware of the need for social and political changes that will enable Tibet to guard its independence. Lungshar's idea of a republic, implanted in his mind during his stay in Europe, would have served Tibet well had it been properly executed. But unfortunately the root cause of the failure was in Lungshar himself. Though extremely learned and brilliant, Lungshar's ambition for power was wild and he did not hesitate to justify any means to achieve his ends. In him, the western mentality and the Tibetan method brought an uncomfortable blend. His

progressive outlook was overshadowed by his superstitious mentality. His skill for a sensible change of systems was poisoned by his strong selfishness. His extreme partiality brought him many enemies who had the patience to wait for him to rise high so that he fell down the heavier. When Lungshar tried to inflict death or mutilation on Kunphela, the Assembly did not support him. When his own mutilation was suggested the support was unanimous. In the end, it was Lungshar's warped personality that brought him to undergo such a rare and severe punishment. The story of Lungshar is a tragedy both of a callous system that crushed the progressive ideas of a brilliant individual and an intelligent individual overpowered by a lust for power which, disguised in numerous cloaks often more reactionary than progressive, tried to control the nerve-pulse of the system that he half-wanted to overthrow. Lungshar, a man of our own times, remains an enigma. His place in Tibetan history is controversial but never threatened. Though apparently self-seeking, revengeful and diabolical in his means and methods of attaining power and prestige, he was a cut above the others. History can condemn him but can not forget him. For he created history as very few Tibetans have done. In the words of H. E. Richardson: "Lungshar was an unusual phenomena in Tibet. In him certain qualities inherent in the Tibetan character were overdeveloped and exaggerated. A strain of recklessness made him in the well-worn phrase, "drunk with power."

THE DEMISE OF THE LAMAIST STATE

Melvyn C. Goldstein

Source: M. C. Goldstein (with the help of Gelek Rimpoche), "Conclusion", *A History of Modern Tibet, 1913-1951: The Demise of the Lamaist State*, Berkeley: University of California Press, 1989, pp. 815-24. Reprinted by kind permission of the University of California Press, Berkeley.

Though the nature of Sino-Tibetan political relations before 1913 may be open to dispute, Tibet unquestionably controlled its own internal and external affairs during the period from 1913 to 1951 and repeatedly attempted to secure recognition and validation of its de facto autonomy/independence. It is equally unquestionable that Chinese leaders in the twentieth century, Nationalist and Communist alike, believed that historically Tibet was a part of China and sought to reunify it with the "mother". This disjunction of beliefs between the two countries created a climate of tension and dispute. Both tried to reach a common ground wherein their aspirations could be satisfied, but in the end Tibet was forced, for the first time in Tibetan history, to accept Chinese *sovereignty*.

The actors and events of the 1913-1951 period have been examined in detail in the preceding chapters. It remains to highlight the main underlying causes of the demise of the de facto independent Lamaist State.

The Chinese invasion of Eastern Tibet was a major factor in the final capitulation of the Tibetan government. First, then, we must explain the military weakness that permitted the Chinese an easy victory even though Tibet had had thirty-eight years in which to prepare for confrontation. Tibet's religious segment was ultimately responsible for its military backwardness; that conservative element repeatedly thwarted those who believed that modernization of both the government and the army was necessary for Tibet to preserve its status. Tibet saw itself as a uniquely religious country in which the pursuit of Buddhism was the dominant goal. A letter from the Tibetan government to Chiang Kai-shek in 1946 (cited in full in Chapter 15) expressed this view eloquently: "There are many great nations on this earth who have achieved unprecedented wealth and might, but there is only one nation which is dedicated to the well-being of humanity in the world and that is the religious land of Tibet which cherishes a joint spiritual and temporal system." This religious ideology took two major concrete forms: the ruler of the state was an incarnate lama; and the religiosity of the state was measured by the size of its monastic community, which expected the religious government to foster monasticism and saw its own perpetuation and elaboration as the quintessential accomplishment of the state.

The monks' commitment to a large-scale, rather than an elite, monasticism implicitly meant a decision to recruit and sustain many monks who, on the average, were of low quality. These monks – subsidized by government grants, manorial estates, endowments from private donors, and monastic banking activities – absorbed a large portion of Tibet's resources.

The Three monastic Seats, and the thousands of scattered smaller Gelugpa monasteries for which they acted as spokesmen, believed that they represented the fundamental interests of Buddhism and were obligated to preserve the religious values of the state. Thus, the monasteries worked in the government to prevent modernization, which they believed to be detrimental to both the economic base of monasticism and the "value" monopoly of Tibetan Buddhism.

A number of potential turning points between tradition and change occurred during this period, but at each, the monasteries and their allies in the government supported the most conservative positions. The first such turning point involved the 1920-1925 dispute over the expansion of the army. After the 13th Dalai Lama returned to Lhasa in 1913, he instituted a number of reforms and innovations aimed at modernizing Tibet, among them the development of the army. Headed by the Dalai Lama's close favorite, the progressive Tsarong Shaphe, the army experimented with various styles of military training and then settled on the British system. Tsarong's young aristocratic army commanders generally shared his belief that the future of Tibet and its unique way of life depended on its ability to defend itself from China and Nepal, as well as from its own monasteries. They believed that efficiency, not religion and superstition, should dictate policy and were in favor of adopting many of the techniques and methods of the West, particularly those of Britain. Many of these young commanders obtained military training in British India during the period from 1913 to 1919 and exhibited an esprit de corps unique in Tibet. By 1918-1919, Tibet had put together a small but credible armed force that thoroughly drubbed the Chinese troops they encountered in the warfare in Kham. As E. Teichman, a British official in Kham, commented, the fighting there showed clearly that with effective leadership and modern weapons Tibet was able to more than hold its own against China.

Tsarong realized, however, that notwithstanding the victories in Kham, Tibet needed to expand and improve its army as well as to modernize the administrative infrastructure of the government. This goal brought the military into direct confrontation with the monastic segment, monastic supporters among the great landed aristocrats, and the monk-official branch of the bureaucracy. Economic losses and a deterioration of values were their main fears.

Since the central governments regular income was inadequate to sustain an army even the size of that of 1919, increases in the number of troops required new revenue. And since the overwhelming bulk of Tibet's resources were earmarked for the monasteries, religious ceremonies, and the aristocracy, additional revenue would have to come from higher taxes paid by religious and lay estate holders.

The Tsarong-led army posed another, equally serious threat to the monastic segment and its conservative supporters. Tsarong and the majority of the military commanders adopted a conspicuously Western style of life; they often wore Western clothes and openly expressed their admiration of Western material goods and values. This Western orientation frightened the monks, who considered the alien

British culture to be a direct threat to Buddhism's continued dominance in Tibet. From the monastic point of view, there was no telling what the military might demand or implement if they increased their size and power, given their leaders' lack of respect for "traditional" Tibetan customs. And if the aristocratic and trading elite gradually became Anglicized through the introduction of English education and customs, religion could ultimately lose its patronage and Tibet its distinctive character. The young and arrogant Western-oriented military officers' corps was therefore perceived by the monks and other religious conservatives as a threat to the very foundations of the Lamaist State.

For both these reasons, the religious conservatives set about persuading the 13th Dalai Lama that the military he had created and placed under the command of his closest favorite posed a danger to Tibet. Led by the Dalai Lama's old and trusted Drönyerchemmo, Ara gaapo, the monastic-religious faction (as was discussed in Chapter 3) used the National Assembly incident of 1921 and the mutilation punishments ordered by Tsarong in 1924 to convince the Dalai Lama that the military seriously threatened Tibet's religious state and his own position as ruler. Consequently, in 1924–1925, the Dalai Lama dismissed Tsarong and all the other commanders and rescinded a host of other development and modernization projects such as the English school that had been set up in Gyantse in 1924.

The Tibetan military never recovered from this assault. In the first major confrontation between tradition and change, Tibet had chosen to face the future firmly rooted in the institutions and ideology of the past. It is not surprising, then, that when the People's Republic of China confronted Tibet in 1950–1951, Tibet was unable to defend its territory for more than a matter of days.

A second critical turning point occurred immediately after the death of the 13th Dalai Lama in December 1933, when the National Assembly decided on the appointment of the regent. Many wanted a politically experienced regent with some understanding of world affairs. It was suggested that a lay official and a monk official be appointed to help, or, alternatively, that Kumbela, the late Dalai Lama's favorite, act as Langdün's associate. The monastic segment, however, insisting again upon Tibet's unique religious identity, said that the country needed an incarnate lama as regent in order to have someone to venerate. Therefore the National Assembly appointed the very young and inexperienced Reting Rimpoche to rule jointly with Lönchen Langdün. As we have seen, by the mid-1940s Reting had plunged Tibet into chaos and civil war.

A third major turning point occurred four months after Reting's appointment as regent, when a lay official, Lungshar, attempted to reform the structure of the government through his Kyicho Küntün party. Lungshar, one of Tibet's most progressive lay officials, had lived in England in 1913 and realized that all political systems must adapt to a changing world. To friends and family he often expressed his belief that Tibet should learn from the experiences of Europe where some members of royalty, as in France, were ultimately overthrown and killed while others, as in England, relinquished their absolute power and were able to maintain an important and cherished ceremonial role. Lungshar's party (Chapter 6) would have limited the terms of the Kashag and made it partially responsible to the National Assembly. Had he succeeded, he then intended to institute major reforms to strengthen Tibet administratively and militarily. His brilliant reform plan almost succeeded, but when it failed, the magnitude of his punishment sent a clear message to any other officials

who wished to reform Tibet's system: both of Lungshar's eyes were removed, his estates were confiscated, and his progeny was prohibited from serving the government.

The six years following the destruction of Lungshar (1934-1941) were dominated by the personality and morality of Reting Rimpoche and his main advisor, Nyungne Lama. The strict adherence to rules and regulations that had characterized the 13th Dalai Lama's reign was abandoned during this period, and Tibet stagnated. While Reting indulged himself, his labrang, often through dubious methods, became one of the three largest wool traders in Tibet. Any official who defied him or spoke out against him was demoted, dismissed, or utterly destroyed.

One such official was Khyungram, the lay official who in the National Assembly criticized the idea of giving Reting additional estates. His opinion reflected the feelings of many conscientious lay and monk officials who felt that if Reting needed a reward for discovering the new Dalai Lama, they would prefer to contribute from their private funds rather than deplete the governments estates. When Khyungram's plan to submit a petition to the assembly was discovered, Reting had him arrested on an unrelated charge. Khyungram was dismissed from government service, his children were barred from ever serving as officials, and all his estates were confiscated; even his wives were sent back to their original families. He was publicly whipped and then exiled for life in remote Western Tibet, where he soon died. Coming on the heels of the Lungshar affair, this harsh punishment underlined the vulnerability of the aristocracy. Let alone actively trying to change the governmental structure, as Lungshar had done, even criticizing the incarnate lamas who ruled the country proved extremely dangerous: lay officials stood to lose not only their positions but their family estates and hereditary status.

It is important to contrast the vulnerability of the lay aristocracy with the invulnerability of the monasteries. When monasteries rebelled against the government (and lost) they immediately argued that at fault was, not the monastic institution, but only its temporary inhabitants. They could contend that monasteries and monastic estates were held in trust from the monks of the past for the monks of the future. Thus, monasteries were not usually closed or their estates confiscated. For example, in 1921, after the monks of Loseling college defiantly defecated and urinated in the Dalai Lama's garden, the college did not lose any estates (Chapter 3). In 1944, when the monks of Sera monastery murdered a district official, the monastery lost nothing. Even in Reting's rebellion, Reting Labrang lost only the wealth and possessions acquired during the *current* incarnation's reign, and Sera Che lost nothing (Chapters 13 and 14).

Reting's most significant blow to the Lamaist State was his sudden resignation from the regency in late 1940. Unable to administer the monastic vows to the young Dalai Lama because he himself had broken the required vow of celibacy, Reting had no choice but to resign. By hand-picking his successor, Taktra, he attempted to insure that he could later return to the regency. Reting's plan was that Taktra, an old and strict lama who he believed would be grateful for the chance to be regent, would look after the interests of Reting Labrang and then resign when Reting was ready to return. But Reting was completely wrong in his assessment of Taktra.

Taktra apparently had been displeased by Reting's behavior as regent. From the beginning of his own reign he set out to restore a higher level of discipline and morality. He issued a public statement that *his* labrang would not engage in trade and

gradually placed anti-Reting officials in key positions. Quite the contrary to showing favoritism to Reting or his friends, he began to attack those officials who supported Reting. In 1944–1945, when Reting came to Lhasa to try to regain the regency, Taktra refused to resign and Reting, disgruntled, was forced to return to his monastery.

From this point on, Reting and his advisors plotted to overthrow Taktra by illegal means. They devised a plan to assassinate him and others such as Lhalu. They also appealed to China for assistance, promising in return to maintain close and friendly relations. This appeal to Chiang Kai-shek for military and political aid resulted in Reting's arrest in 1947. He later died in prison, apparently having been poisoned.

In support of Reting, Sera Che college began open warfare with the government. They were easily defeated, but by the summer of 1947, when Tibet might have been preparing for the post-World War II efforts of China to bring the country under Chinese rule, it was hopelessly divided into pro-Reting and pro-Taktra factions. Indeed, many of Reting's followers saw the Chinese government as the only means of destroying the hated Taktra. Thus, the legacy of Reting's inability to remain a celibate monk destroyed the unity of the Tibetan government at a most critical point in its history.

Irrespective of the Reting opposition, the Taktra administration tried to improve Tibet's international status and strengthen its internal capabilities. The creation of an English school in Lhasa in late 1944 was one of the more visible of these attempts. The Tibetan government, realizing that securing Western equipment such as wireless broadcasting units was pointless without skilled personnel to run the equipment, embarked on a program of educating young aristocrats and monk-officials' relatives to form an English-speaking infrastructure. This action brought vehement opposition from the monastic segment, which forced the school to close by threatening to send their fierce *dobdo* monks to kidnap and sexually abuse the students. Once again, the monasteries and their conservative allies thwarted even a small step toward modernization. Their rationale was the same as it had been in 1921–1925: the school would inculcate alien, atheistic ideas and would thus harm the religious value system.

The monks also contended that history from 1913 on showed that Tibet could maintain its independence without radical solutions or major changes. After the school closed, the government sent a few Tibetans to India for education, but the monastic segment had made their point: they would not tolerate modernization. Thus, when the final showdown with China came in 1950–1951, Tibet had only a handful of officials who spoke English well and virtually none who understood diplomacy and international relations. Moreover, the army had deteriorated to a state of hopeless inefficiency. Although the Taktra government had tried to purchase modern weapons, they feared inviting military instructors from the West or sending large numbers of Tibetan officers abroad. The Tibetan army that ultimately faced the People's Liberation Army was poorly trained, poorly equipped, and pathetically led. Ironically, by trying to protect Tibet's cherished Buddhist values and ideology from possible contamination by Western institutions, the monastic and religious conservatives created a set of conditions whereby the government was unable to defend and preserve those very religious values from the Chinese Communists.

These internal events are by no means the only factors that led to the demise of the Lamaist State. Equally important was the refusal of Tibet's traditional friends and neighbors to provide effective diplomatic and military support. Throughout the

period 1913–1947, Britain was Tibet's main supporter and the only noncontiguous country with whom Tibet maintained foreign relations. The British goal during this period was to maintain Tibet as a buffer zone in which Chinese and Russian influence was excluded and British and British Indian interests predominated. Britain did not secure this goal either by offering Tibet substantial assistance toward independence or by incorporating Tibet into its Indian empire as a protectorate, as it had done for Sikkim and Bhutan. Believing that either action would alienate China and Russia and would create serious problems for Britain's international interests, it instead adopted a policy based on the idea of *autonomy* for Tibet within the context of Chinese *suzerainty*, that is to say, de facto independence for Tibet in the context of token subordination to China. Britain articulated this policy in the Simla Convention of 1914.

The Simla agreement gave Britain not only dominant influence in Tibet but also favorable trade rights and the vast territory east of Bhutan known as the North East Frontier Area (today known as Arunachal Pradesh). Tibet reluctantly agreed to the "autonomous" status designated in the Simla agreement, believing that it would permanently guarantee Chinese noninterference in Tibetan affairs. But China, which gained little from the agreement, refused to ratify it.

Britain, unwilling to let its Simla gains slip away simply because China refused to sign the agreement, opted to make the agreement with Tibet on a *bilateral* basis, since this secured for Britain (and its Indian colony) all the rights contained in the original tripartite agreement. Even so, Britain did not alter its policy of refusing to acknowledge Tibet as a completely independent state, even though the only authority for the rights it now claimed in Tibet (and NEFA) were implicitly based on such an acknowledgment. From 1914 on, Britain dealt with Tibet completely independently of China, but officially it recognized Tibet only as *autonomous* under Chinese *suzerainty*. Britain therefore, was unwilling to assist Tibet in securing an independent international status, and it refused to assure Tibet that if China attacked – for example, as a consequence of Tibet actively seeking international recognition of its de facto independent status – Britain would support Tibet militarily.

When Britain left India in 1947, it abandoned its interest in Tibet, yielding all initiative to the newly independent Indian state. Thus, at the time of the 1948 trade mission, instead of trying to foster an independent identity for Tibet, Britain refused even to issue visas on Tibetan passports. And two years later, in December 1950, when Tibet appealed to the United Nations for help, it was the British delegate who spoke first, informing his colleagues on the world body that after a half-century of intimate relations with Tibet, His Majesty's Government felt that the status of Tibet was unclear and suggesting that Tibet's appeal be postponed.

The Tibetan policy of the independent Indian government was similar to that of colonial India in certain respects and widely divergent in other critical areas. The new Indian government sought to continue the bilateral Simla relationship and asked Tibet to recognize them as the successor to the British, that is, to recognize the transfer of all the gains Britain derived from Simla. From the beginning, however, Nehru had no intention of continuing Britain's support of Tibet's de facto independence nor of working to prevent Chinese influence in Tibet. The new Chinese Communist government had unequivocally asserted its *sovereignty* over Tibet and had made it clear that Sino-Indian friendship would be impossible unless India supported China's

position with regard to Tibet. Nehru saw Sino-Indian friendship as critical to a new Asia and to the creation of a new moral order in the non-Western world, and he saw Tibet as a threat to that relationship. India also strongly opposed U.S. involvement in the Tibet issue. The Tibetan policy pursued by the Indian government forced Tibet into a settlement with China on China's terms.

After the fall of Chiang Kai-shek, the United States became increasingly interested in Tibet as a bastion of anti-Communist ideology in East Asia. Although in the critical months of November and December 1950 and January 1951, the United States dealt the Tibetan government a painful setback by failing to accept a Tibetan delegation to the United States and by allowing the Tibetan appeal to the United Nations to be set aside, nevertheless, after Tibet signed the Seventeen-Point Agreement with China (Chapter 20), the United States was the only country that expressed any interest in assisting Tibet against the Chinese. It was unwilling openly to support complete independence for Tibet, and it could not offer Tibet military aid because of Indian hostility to U.S. involvement, but it offered to help the Dalai Lama and his large entourage to resettle in exile if he would disavow the Seventeen-Point Agreement. The U.S. offer was not attractive enough to swing opinion in Tibet against the liberal terms offered by the People's Republic of China. When this became evident, the United States tried to enlarge its offers, but it was too late. The Dalai Lama and the Tibetan government had decided that the best way to preserve their religious polity was to try to work within the terms of the Seventeen-Point Agreement.

THE RWA-SGRENG CONSPIRACY OF 1947

Hugh Richardson

Source: M. Aris and Aung San Suu Kyi (eds.), *Tibetan Studies in Honour of Hugh Richardson: Proceedings of the International Seminar on Tibetan Studies, 1979*, Warminster: Aris & Phillips, 1980, pp. xvi–xx.

The attempted *coup d'état* by the ex-regent of Tibet, the Rwa-sgreng Rin-po-che, has been mentioned from different points of view by several writers who were in Lhasa at the time. In *Seven Years in Tibet* Heinrich Harrer has described his experience of the affair; and I have given a short account in my *Tibet and its History*. Rinchen Dolma Taring in *Daughter of Tibet* shows considerable sympathy for the Rwa-sgreng Rin-po-che from whom her husband had received much kindness. W. D. Shakabpa, although to some extent *parti pris* as an important official and as a kinsman of the Chang-khyim Bka'-blon bla-ma whom the ex-regent had brusquely dismissed from office in 1940, provides well-informed and balanced information. From the Chinese angle Shen and Liu in their *Tibet* prefer, for reasons that will appear, not to go into the matter too deeply; and Li Tieh-tse, who was not at Lhasa, is inaccurate on many points in his *Historical Status of Tibet*.

It would probably be difficult now to secure a complete picture of the political and monastic intrigues and rivalries involved, so it may be worth recording something more of what I saw and heard at the time and of preceding events that had a bearing on the affair. Some of this may seem mere gossip; but what was being said in those days is itself part of history.

Four days after the death of the thirteenth Dalai Lama on 17 December 1933 the Hutuktu of Rwa-sgreng, 'Jam-dpal ye-shes rgyal-mtshan, was appointed regent in a choice by lot between himself and the Khri Rin-po-che of Dga'-ldan. The young man, born about 1913 into a poor family of Rkong-po, and without any political experience, assumed office at a difficult time. The wayward and headstrong *Rtsis-dpon* Lung-shar had swiftly ousted Kun-'phel-lags, his principal rival among the close advisers of the late Dalai Lama, and was set on a wild pursuit of power. His main opponent was the shrewd and experienced Khri-smon *Zhabs-pad*. A plot by Lung-shar to have him assassinated was disclosed to Khri-smon, who fled to 'Bras-spungs and prevailed on the regent to set up a commission of enquiry. Lung-shar was found guilty of treasonable offences and was sentenced to be blinded and imprisoned. The sentence was confirmed by the regent.

My first meeting with the Rwa-sgreng Rin-po-che was in 1936 when I accompanied Sir Basil Gould to Lhasa. He seemed gauche and lacked the poise, the gracious good

manners and serene composure of most incarnate lamas; and, above all, he appeared immature. Indeed, I think a streak of immaturity marked him throughout his life. It was already commonly said that he was fond of money and was favourably disposed towards the Chinese from whom he had received lavish presents at the time of Huang Mu-sung's mission to Lhasa. Certainly Li Tieh-tseng describes him as "pro-Chinese" and claims, further, that he asked Chiang Kai-shek for confirmation of his appointment. That is finally denied by all Tibetan officials but it was admitted that the appointment was reported to the Chinese government.

As time went on I saw several instances of the regent's naive and self-centred nature. I will give only one. On a visit to him I was asked if the government of India would like to give him a motor car. Remembering past objections to our own use of motor vehicles in Tibet I declined to recommend such a present but offered to help him acquire a car for himself. He smiled sadly and said that if he could tell his people that the British had given him a car and he, therefore, felt obliged to use it, he could then ask them to make motor roads for him.

A more unpleasant manifestation of immaturity was his vindictiveness towards those he disliked. When the Tibetan government refused him some additional estates which he coveted he soon trumped up a charge of conspiracy against Khyung-ram Theiji, who had led the opposition, and banished him with the utmost humiliation. He also publicly disgraced Kun-bzang-rtse *Bla-phyag*; and he secured the removal of the *Srid-blon*, with whom he was supposed to collaborate, by charging him with delaying public business and threatening to resign if the *Srid-blon* was not dismissed.

On a lighter note, at least for western observers of the scene, was the occasion when, with a display of moral rectitude, the regent decreed that all monk officials who had mistresses should get rid of them or resign their posts. The principal victim, whether intended or not, was the aged *Spyi-khyab mkhan-po* who is reported to have said that he needed to keep warm at night and was too old to change his ways.

I do not think that my opinion of the Rwa-sgreng Rin-po-che was affected by his reputed leaning towards the Chinese in which it appeared that money mattered more than principle or conviction; and his attitude did not affect the policy of his government in which the strongest voice continued to be that of the National Assembly, which refused to deviate from the example and instructions of the late Dalai Lama. It must be said that those who were his favourites and close associates – mostly young people, naturally enough – spoke of him personally with respect and affection but I think that most officials were somewhat guarded in their attitude. And here I may draw attention to a factor affecting the career of any regent. He could not, of course, enjoy the special prestige of a Dalai Lama because he was simply a substitute; but his authority also might be restricted by the fact that every regent was associated with one or other of the great monasteries and with a particular college in that monastery so that other monasteries and even other colleges in his own monastery might feel jealous. It was intermonastic rivalry that caused the downfall of the only preceding Rwa-sgreng Hutuktu to hold the office of regent at intervals between 1845 and 1866; and in the present case the regent's affiliation to the Byes college of Se-ra was to have tragic consequences for both.

At the end of 1940, when the new Dalai Lama had been installed, the Rwa-sgreng regent retired, ostensibly because the portents for his health were bad unless he devoted himself to prayer and meditation. Less charitable rumours were that laxity

in his vows of chastity caused him qualms of conscience about taking part in the religious instruction of the young, Dalai Lama. That charge was made in posters hung up around Lhasa in which a certain lady was named.

Other criticism expressed in posters and in slogans shouted mainly by monks of 'Bras-spungs was that the regent was too much devoted to trade. Li Tieh-tseng makes the further, unsubstantiated, suggestion that a Young Tibet Group, which existed only in his imagination, also accused the regent of having dictated the choice of Dalai Lama in order to satisfy his personal ambition. It is true that there was some uneasiness in Lhasa that the Dalai Lama had been discovered in territory under Chinese control and that it was reported that he would be brought to Lhasa by Chinese troops. But any anxiety there may have been was dispelled when only a handful of ragged soldiers accompanied the child to Lhasa; and even greater was the relief and joyful emotion of the people of Lhasa when they saw the perfect behaviour and radiant charm of the boy himself.

At all events, the regent retired to Rwa-sgreng and there was appointed in his place the elderly, conservative, Stag-brag Rin-po-che. Later it was said that there had been an understanding or at least an expectation that the Rwa-sgreng Rin-po-che would resume office after a few years but there does not seem to have been any mention of that at the time. Nevertheless, in 1944 rumours began to circulate that the Stag-brag Rin-po-che would retire and the Rwa-sgreng return. His college of Byes invited him to perform a ceremony there and in December he came to Lhasa and was publicly received with full honours. The rumours thereupon increased greatly. Unfortunately the Rwa-sgreng Rin-po-che's stay in Se-ra coincided with serious trouble between the Tibetan government and his college of Byes, some of whose monks killed a civil official in a dispute about tax collection. The college refused to surrender the culprits and eventually the Tibetan government sent troops to enter the monastery by force. Whether he was involved in the affair or not, the Rin-po-che wisely left Lhasa before the worst. But the affair created much unease and intrigue including an unexplained attack on Lha-klu *Rtsis-dpon*, a son of Lung-shar and therefore no friend of the Rwa-sgreng Rin-po-che. Rumours persisted but the Stag-brag Rin-po-che showed no sign of retiring.

On 14 April 1947 matters came to a head. The Rwa-sgreng's Lhasa residence was suddenly put under seal and a number of prominent persons were arrested including the Phun-khang *Gung* whose second son had been the principal favourite of the ex-regent and whose eldest son was the husband of the senior Maharajkumari of Sikkim. He, too, was imprisoned along with his father who had not long before been dismissed from the post of *Zhabs-pad*. The National Assembly was in emergency session and it was learnt that troops had been sent to Rwa-sgreng to arrest the Rin-po-che. We were told that a parcel, ostensibly from the commissioner in Khams, had been sent to the regent. It lay unopened until an anonymous message charged that a valuable present was being withheld from him. The box was then opened by a servant and found to contain a hand-grenade held down by a sliding lid. The device exploded, fortunately without causing much injury. According to Shakabpa, that had happened some time before and the crisis was precipitated when the Tibetan government received information from their representative in China that the Rwa-sgreng Rin-po-che had sent a letter to Chiang Kai-shek asking for help in removing the Stag-brag Rin-po-che whom he accused of tyrannous misgovernment.

When news of the arrest of the Rwa-sgreng Rin-po-che reached Lhasa the monks of Se-ra Byes, who were attending the *tshogs-mchod* ceremony, abruptly left Lhasa and hurrying back to their college in riotous mood, murdered their abbot who tried to restrain them. There would clearly be trouble when the ex-regent arrived at Lhasa in custody; so a curfew was imposed. In the event some monks of Se-ra Byes opened fire on the escort party but without effect; and the Rin-po-che was safely lodged in the Potala. That night there was sporadic firing in the city and in the tension and alarm of the next day arms were issued to young monks and lay officials, while most of the nobles and their families changed their silk robes for home-spun and took refuge in the Potala, many of them having deposited their larger valuables with the Nepalese representative. On the same day Mkharrdo Rin-po-che, a close associate of the ex-regent, was arrested and there was random shooting in and around the city including the neighbourhood of Nor-bu-gling-ka, where three unfortunate monks from some remote place walked innocently into trouble. One was killed by shots from the barracks of the Dalai Lama's bodyguard and the others were the first casualties to be brought into the British Mission's rough-and-ready hospital.

The *bka'-shag* asked that Reginald Fox, our wireless officer, might visit Gra-phyi (Trapchi) to put their radio sets in working order. He was eager to go and I allowed this on the following day after getting a written guarantee of his safety and having instilled into him the need for discretion. On the same day the Tibetan artillery – two elderly mountain guns – was deployed and a few warning shots were fired towards Se-ra Byes. There followed some days of desultory hostilities and uneasy negotiation in which the Tibetan government claimed to have gone to the limit of conciliation but with no response. In the meantime conditions in Lhasa had become difficult. The Trapchi soldiery created alarm by looting shops; and supplies began to run out because people from outside were afraid to come into the city.

On 27th April, after reinforcements had arrived from Gyantse, a vigorous attack was launched on Byes. By then the trial of the Rwa-sgreng Rin-po-che and his associates had taken place in the Potala before the National Assembly. He had asked for trial by a small commission but that was refused. He prostrated himself before the court and protested his innocence, but when confronted with incriminating letters he confessed his part, though claiming that the only help he had asked from the Chinese was that they should send aircraft to drop leaflets over Lhasa. Later, his close friend the Mkharrdo Rin-po-che broke down under questioning and disclosed a wide-ranging conspiracy including several abortive attempts on the life of the regent and responsibility for the attack on Lha-klu *Rtsis-dpon*. On the day the full scale attack was made on Se-ra Byes, the *bka'-shag* sent me a written account of the affair making it plain that the Rwa-sgreng Rin-po-che had conspired against the life of the regent and had also sought Chinese support against the government.

The Tibetan government could no longer endure the continuing challenge from Byes, which refused all offers of a settlement. It should be understood that it was only a militant body in that college which was in rebellion; other colleges of Se-ra and all of 'Bras-spungs remained aloof. The steady bombardment by the artillery was met at first by rifle-fire and occasional blasts from a primitive cannon which the monks of Byes loaded with scrap of all kinds and trundled out on a short stretch of rail but by 29th April the militants could not hold out any longer. They are said to have stripped the images of the deities off their robes and exposed them on the college roof in

disgust at the failure of divine protection. They themselves took to the hills behind Se-ra where they came under heavy rifle fire from the infantry, which drove them in flight towards Rwa-sgreng and beyond. It is said that about 300 monks were killed and 15 soldiers. For some days after the fight the dead lay exposed on the hillside and people from Lhasa, especially the wives of the Trapchi soldiery usually disguised in men's clothes, stripped the bodies of such possessions as they had.

A pursuit party was sent to Rwa-sgreng where, after an initial reverse, it occupied the monastery and seized the private property of the Rin-po-che, including much gold secreted in the latrines. There was a good deal of looting of the possessions of other monks also. Se-ra Byes was occupied by the Tibetan government and an enquiry and a search for arms was undertaken.

It remained to sentence the guilty. The Tibetan government consulted the State Oracle of Gnas-chung but he only beat his breast and threw grains of barley into the air. It was said there was talk of putting out the Rwa-sgreng's eyes but that the regent had firmly turned down such a suggestion. Certainly there is no truth in Li Tieh-tse's statement that the Rin-po-che was blinded. I do not know whether any decision was reached but the dilemma was resolved on 8th May by the death of the Rwa-sgreng Rin-po-che. Inevitably, there were rumours that he had been murdered, and tales of shrieks from the Potala at night. There was no such thing as an autopsy in Tibet but the body was formally examined by the abbots of the great monasteries and many representative officials who reported no suspicious signs except for some blue marks on the left thigh.

On 12th May I visited the *bka'-shag* in the Potala at their request. Speaking in sorrow rather than triumph they gave me an account of the affair and said that the Rwa-sgreng Rin-po-che had signed a full confession which together with the incriminating letters were being made public throughout the city. They gravely informed me that the Rin-po-che had been so overcome with shame and remorse that he had voluntarily departed this life. It appeared that he had had a seizure of some sort a few days before and had been attended by the highly respected abbot of the medical college. It is not impossible that he did die of a heart attack, but there were insistent whispers of poisoning – always suspected in the sudden death of an important person – and of that other traditional bloodless assassination by stuffing a silk scarf down the throat. There is no certainty; but the version most commonly believed was that a person, whom I shall not name, caused the ex-regent's death by crushing his genitals.

Punishment of the other guilty persons was inflicted in the Zhol on 18th May. The Rwa-sgreng's elder brother steadfastly received 250 strokes. Mkharrdo Rin-po-che, who was said to be in a state of collapse, received 260, and both were imprisoned in a building specially made in the barracks at Nor-bu-gling-ka. Lesser floggings were handed out to the others; and some monks of Byes were shackled and handed over to various high officials for house custody. I saw some of them later. The private property of the Rwa-sgreng was sold by auction; and, to remove evil influences, a service of exorcism was conducted by the Sa-skya *Khri-chen*. The shock to public opinion and the ill-feeling and faction beneath the general appearance of religious distress could not, however, be so readily dispelled. Posters soon appeared in Lhasa describing the regent as the modern Glang-dar-ma; the infamous Ka-shod *Zhabs-pad* as "Drum-head" that is "facing both ways"; Lha-klu *Rtsis-dpon* as *Blon-po* Khri-gzhu, a wicked minister in the *A-lce lha-mo* drama; and the senior *Drung-yig chen-po* as the Raven.

Later in 1947 the Dalai Lama visited Se-ra to restore relations with the monastery but the affair had seriously damaged the solidarity of the Tibetan government at a time when coming events demanded unity and resolution.

I may add a few marginal comments. It was rumoured in Lhasa that it was the British who had got wind of the Rwa-sgreng Rin-po-che's involvement with the Chinese and had informed the Tibetan government. I can claim no such omniscience. We knew nothing until the affair blew up. It was also said that I had fired one of the mountain guns at Se-ra. That was untrue; but I traced the source of the story to the visit of Reginald Fox to Trapchi when, as he confessed later, his experience as a gunner in the First World War had carried him away to such an extent that he laid one of the guns.

My only intervention, in fact, was to transmit an enquiry to the *bka'-shag* from the Maharaja of Sikkim about their action against the Phun-khang father and son. I was told that they were being treated considerately. The Maharajkumari frequently came to our mission and took favourite dishes, prepared by my cook, to her husband and his father in prison. Phun-khang *Sras* was soon released as there was no charge against him; and the *Gung* was later discharged as he had only forwarded a sealed letter from the ex-regent to a famous tantric practitioner in Khams which was found to be a request for ceremonies to bring about a change of regime at Lhasa.

Our mission was, in general, little affected except for receiving some two dozen wounded from either camp who lay meekly side by side in our small hospital under the kindly discipline of Major James Guthrie, the mission doctor.

I was in constant touch with the Foreign Bureau who insisted on sending two soldiers to guard our totally unprotected mission. On their first night one nervously loosed off at a shadow, after which my major domo removed their ammunition and gave them shelter in our courtyard. Our social meetings with the Nepalese and Chinese continued, as did my, daily walks in the country, alone with my dog.

The position of the Chinese was more difficult. They had to ask protection for some Chinese monks who were in Se-ra Byes and also to explain why a member of their staff happened to be at Rwa-sgreng when the Rin-po-che was arrested. They also saw the publication of the ex-regent's secret message to Chiang Kai-shek. Although the Chinese would surely have taken advantage of a successful coup, it is doubtful whether at the time they either would or could have given active help.

One event that caused some amusement centred round Ka-shod *Zhabs-pad* who was widely unpopular for his pride and unscrupulousness. He was a known supporter of the ex-regent and strongly suspected of having backed Byes in their dispute with the government. So when people saw baggage being loaded outside his house and his womenfolk in tears around him, there was merriment in the belief that he too was on his way to prison. In fact, the *bka'-shag* had slyly appointed him to command the attack on Byes and the furious abuse that greeted him there as turncoat and coprophagite went to confirm his former complicity. Somehow his tortuous and dishonourable career lasted a further two years until, in 1949, he was accused of treasonable contacts with the Chinese in Lhasa; and, having bought his way out of a flogging, was sent into exile riding on a bullock, only to turn up again in 1952, like a bad penny, in the wake of the communist occupation.

Of very different stamp was Zur-khang *Zhabs-pad* who was deputed to arrest the Rwa-sgreng Rin-po-che. He told me how he left his military escort outside the monastery and went in alone not knowing what the Rin-po-che's armed bodyguard might

do. He prostrated himself before the Rin-po-che and informed him that he was to be taken to Lhasa under arrest. It was a relief when the Rin-po-che, whom he had never met before, accepted the news with resignation. Nevertheless some of his men later fired on the government troops. On the way to Lhasa the Rin-po-che seemed greatly alarmed and prattled distractedly – a pathetic rather than a tragic figure. He repeatedly begged pardon for having confiscated a disputed estate to which Zur-khang had a rightful claim. Zur-khang, whose attitude in discussing the matter was generous and humane, thought it probable from what he heard on that journey and from the evidence before the trial court that the Rin-po-che really had been anxious to effect his object without violence. If that is so, it seems a further indication of mental immaturity. For while he may not have been an active party in all the plots of his supporters, the Rwa-sgreng Rin-po-che was shown by the evidence to have been in close and constant touch with them and to have sought foreign help to get his way. It would be naive to think that a shower of leaflets from a Chinese aircraft would itself bring about a change of regime at Lhasa. He willed the end and cannot escape all responsibility for the means.

THE DISCOVERY, RECOGNITION, AND INSTALLATION OF THE FOURTEENTH DALAI LAMA

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[with comment by Alastair Lamb]

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There has been a lack of unanimity in accounts of the discovery, recognition, and installation of the new Dalai Lama. The following account is based on what the writer has been told by men who were closely concerned in the actual events and on what he himself has seen.

Tibet and the Tibetans

For two thousand miles, from Kashmir to Burma, the effective main axis of the Himalayas forms the frontier of India, Nepal, and Bhutan. Beyond this frontier lies Tibet, the highest country in the world. The scanty population of this vast isolated area has in the course of time developed a distinctive culture, language, art, religion, and system of government, out of elements some of which were indigenous and some came from neighbouring countries. Of these the most significant were Buddhist influences which from the fifth century onwards flowed in from China, Eastern India, Nepal and Kashmir. Lhasa, which is the natural capital of the country, became the focus both of government and of religion. There is perhaps no other country in the world where the influence of one city is so predominant. Gradually there was evolved a definite system of Lamaistic Buddhism and of divine Priest Kings, whose seat of authority is the Potala at Lhasa. The area over which the Dalai Lamas have exercised temporal authority, and their political relations with China, have varied from time to time.

At a Conference held in Simla in 1913 and 1914 between representatives of His Majesty's Government, China, and Tibet, attempt was made to define the political relationship between Tibet and China, Tibet being prepared to accept the shadow of suzerainty in return for a guarantee of practical autonomy and an agreed Eastern

frontier. But no final decision was reached owing to failure to obtain agreement on the question of frontier. While therefore there is a definite area in which Tibetan culture and religious ideas are predominant, this area does not necessarily coincide with the effective limits of Chinese and Tibetan administrative control at any particular time. To the North-East of the Dichu (Yangtse) river, in the vicinity of Lake Kokonor, there is a large area, Tibetan in its affinities, which Western scholars are inclined to regard as the cradle of the Tibetan race. In a part of this region, which the Tibetans call Amdo, and to the South-East of Lake Kokonor, is situated Kumbum, celebrated in Tibetan history as the place where in 1358 the great reformer of Tibetan Buddhism, Tsongkapa, was born. He founded the famous monasteries of Sera and Ganden, near Lhasa, and his successor founded the Tashi Lhunpo monastery near Shigatse. It is at Kumbum that the present Dalai Lama was born.

Along the two thousand miles of its Southern and Western frontiers Tibet is connected with India and Nepal by many high passes. The most convenient route to Lhasa is by train from Calcutta to Siliguri, which is at the fringe of the Himalayan foot-hills, not far from Darjeeling. Thence the traveller can go by motor 70 miles to Gangtok, the capital of the Buddhist State of Sikkim, and on, over high Himalayan passes and across the Tsangpo river, to Lhasa. The journey, of some twenty-two stages, is usually done on horse-back.

Distinctive features of Tibet are a dry cold sunny climate, high winds, mountains, and great plains with an average floor level of some 14,000 feet; and monasteries and nunneries, to which each family normally sends at least one child. Its chief products are wool (much of which is exported to the United States), meat, milk, cheese, barley, peas, salt and soda, which, with a particular form of "brick" tea imported from China overland and via India, build and keep warm some of the most robust bodies in Asia. Marked characteristics of Tibetans are the absence of self-consciousness, perfect manners; reverence, tolerance both in religious and in social matters, and freedom from clichés and cant; a natural tendency to think straight and to tell the truth; an intuitive habit of thought; and, in politics, an inclination to think in general terms, rather than in terms of the particular issue. The influence of an aristocratic and feudal society is affected by the facts that the Dalai Lama is usually the son of poor or middle-class parents, that any monk may rise to the top in Church or State, and that nobody knows what he was in his last life or what he may be in his next life. The trials of a stern and wild country are relieved by many holidays, a great sense of fun and humour, a habit of laughing out loud, and a good deal in the way of barley-beer and song – especially song in which Tibetan labourers indulge whenever they work. There is very little in the way of secular education, much superstition, and a stoic outlook on life. All classes share the same pleasures. Small-pox, goitre, and the diseases which lower the birth-rate, are common, but there is little tuberculosis and no malaria or enteric. The people have appalling ideas of how to feed small children but the survivors are sturdy and bright. Tibetans have a marvellous feeling for colour and for gaiety of dress and ornament, and a great sense of ceremonial. Women do not rank above men socially but they are not excluded. Once upon a time the Tibetans were great warriors, but now the main influence in the daily life of the people is religion, and, even in matters of foreign policy, – the most powerful estate in the realm is the Church.

The Government of Tibet

The Government of Tibet has as its pivot the Kashag or Cabinet. This ordinarily consists of four members, of whom the senior is always a monk and holds the title of Kalon Lama. The members of the Cabinet are called Shappes. The Shappes work only as a Cabinet, no member – with the exception of the present Kalon Lama who is also Commander-in-Chief – being in charge of any particular department of State. The present lay members are Bhondong Shappe, a man with a long Secretariat experience, of whom more will be heard later; Shappe Phunkang Kung, who derives his title of Kung, or Duke, from his relationship to the eleventh Dalai Lama; and Nang (or Lang) Chung Nga Shappe, who has of late been absent from Lhasa as Commissioner in Eastern Tibet.

While, as in other countries, the strength of various links in the chain of authority varies from time to time, the normal procedure is that the Kashag submits its recommendations to the Prime Minister (who is not in the Cabinet). The Prime Minister makes further reference to the Dalai Lama or Regent, who, in matters of importance, and especially in any matter of major foreign policy or affecting the interests of the monasteries, consults the National Assembly, in which the monasteries are strongly represented. The Regent may further consult the leading monasteries and Oracles. A great deal of political influence is exercised also by the Trungyik Chempos, or Monk Chief Secretaries, who control the affairs of the monasteries, which account for half of the population in and near Lhasa and probably one-third of the male population throughout Central Tibet. The Trungyik Chempos work under the general control of the Dalai Lama whose Chief Staff Officer, the Chikyab Khenpo, or Lord Chamberlain, holds Cabinet rank.

Under the Cabinet work the Secretaries of the various departments and, on the executive side, the District Magistrates, or Jongpons (of whom two, usually one monk and one lay, are normally appointed to each district), and such special officers as the Tibetan Trade Agents at Gyantse and Yatung, the Garpons or Commissioners of Western Tibet, the City Magistrates of Lhasa, and Collectors of taxes on grain, wool, salt, and so forth. In Eastern Tibet, the chief authority is the Commissioner in Kham.

There are official representatives in Lhasa of India, China, Nepal, and Bhutan.

The Dalai Lamas

According to the Buddhist religion, in the animal kingdom death is constantly followed by re-birth – dog or fish being reborn as man, woman, bird, snake, or any other animal, and man perhaps as worm or flea, a good life meriting re-birth on a higher plane, until at last by goodness man may attain to Nirvana.

The Dalai Lama, High-priest and King of Tibet, is regarded by Tibetans as a Bodhisatwa – one who, having attained the right to Nirvana, consents to be reborn for the benefit of his fellow creatures. Various Gods, or aspects of the God-head, and remarkable personalities of former time, are held to be present in the world in human form. The persons in whom they are incarnate are called Yangsi-s – “re-born” – or Trulku-s* – “Change bodies”. Ordinarily when such persons have been discovered they are initiated into the Tibetan Church and are known in English as Incarnation Lamas, or, less accurately, as Living Buddhas. (Only monks of very high degree are

properly called Lama, the real meaning of the word Lama being one to whom unlimited gratitude is due, and, by inference, a teacher of religion. Dalai is a Mongolian word meaning Ocean). But in Tibetan Buddhism there are no absolute rules and it is believed in Tibet that Queen Victoria was the Yangsi of the goddess Palden Lhamo, whose image is in the Great Temple at Lhasa. The Dalai Lamas are incarnations of Chenrezi, the God of Mercy, and are also reincarnations of their predecessors. When a Dalai Lama dies, the primary task which confronts Church and State in Tibet is not to elect or create a successor to the late Dalai Lama but to discover the boy in whom Chenrezi has already become reincarnate.

Death of the thirteenth Dalai Lama

The thirteenth Dalai Lama had been born in the year 1876, had held the reins of government since 1893, and in 1933, full of wisdom and still full of energy, had “retired to the heavenly fields for the benefit of other living creatures”. On his premature and unexpected death there followed a period of confusion and intrigue. There were differences of opinion as to what powers should be exercised by the Cabinet and what by a Regent, and difficulties developed in regard to the appointment of a Regent. Normally the appointment would have fallen to the Great Incarnation Lama, of one of four particular monasteries in Lhasa; but of these one had recently died, two were too young, and the previous Incarnation of the fourth had been accused of having attempted, when Regent, to bring about the death of the thirteenth Dalai Lama by magic. A strong man was needed. It was to be expected that the Chinese Government would utilise the opportunity afforded by the death of the late Dalai Lama to bring pressure on Tibet in various forms, and there were complications in regard to the Tashi Lama. In the end, the National Assembly nominated three candidates. After decision by the drawing of lots the young Incarnation of the Reting monastery was appointed, and the discovery of the fourteenth Dalai Lama became the main preoccupation of Church and State, headed by the Regent. It was not known how much time, by human computation, would pass before the spirit, which must have left the human form of the late Dalai Lama, would choose and enter its new human abode. It was not therefore a case of considering which of many children born at or about a certain time would be likely to make a suitable successor but of searching – as if it were for a hidden treasure – for a child, exact age unknown, whose whereabouts would be indicated by divination and by signs and whose identity would be revealed by the possession of certain bodily characteristics and of marvellous mental and spiritual powers. In the case of most of the Dalai Lamas such indications had not in themselves been so clear as to be conclusive, and in order to attain to certainty it had been necessary to draw lots, after prayers and ceremonies, from a golden urn. In regard to this drawing of lots – in the case not only of the Dalai Lama but of other great incarnation Lamas also – the Chinese Amban (Governor) in Lhasa had from time to time claimed a special authority. (Since 1912 there had been no Amban in Lhasa). But in the cases of the ninth and thirteenth Dalai Lamas the indications had been so clear that there had been no occasion to resort to the drawing of lots.

Soon after the death of the thirteenth Dalai Lama the Tibetan Government instructed all local authorities in Tibet to be on the alert for information in regard to the birth

of any remarkable boy, and the occurrence of any marvellous signs in connection with his birth.

The year 1934 and part of 1935 passed without any clear indication, and there were signs of despondency in Lhasa and throughout Tibet.

The Tashi Lama

Apprehensions were increased by various difficulties which attended negotiations for the return to Tibet of the Tashi Lama. This Incarnation Lama of the Tashi Lhunpo Monastery near Shigatse, is generally held to be the spiritual equal, and by some the spiritual superior, of the Dalai Lama, and he and his predecessors had also acquired considerable temporal power in the Tsang (Shigatse) Province of Tibet. In 1923, fearing the centralising tendencies of the Government of the thirteenth Dalai Lama, the Tashi Lama had fled via Mongolia to China. His presence in Tibet was needed in connection with the search for the new Dalai Lama and for his subsequent recognition and education. On the other hand it was feared that, while in his absence the unity of Tibet, both religiously and politically, might be impaired, his return, on such terms as he and his entourage were prepared to accept, and the Chinese Government to permit, might be disruptive of Tibetan unity. Well wishers both of the Tashi Lama and of the Tibetan Government made great efforts to effect a reconciliation; but on the 30th November 1937 the Tashi Lama died at Jeykundo, on the China-Tibet border, at the age of about 55.

Signs and portents

In the summer of 1935 the Regent visited the holy lake of Chho Khor Gye – ten days' journey South by East from Lhasa – in which some sixty years before the home of the thirteenth Dalai Lama had been revealed. In its still waters the Regent observed the reflection of the letters Ah, Kah, Mah; of a three storied monastery with a gilded roof and turquoise tiles; of a twisting road which led East of the monastery to a bare hillock of earth shaped like a pagoda; and, opposite the hillock, of a small house with eaves of an unfamiliar type. The exact meaning of the vision was obscure but it was thought probable that Ah indicated that the new Dalai Lama had been born somewhere in the Chinese frontier district of Amdo, South-East of Lake Kokonor. Further indications that the child should be sought somewhere to the East of Lhasa were afforded by the State Oracle and the Oracles of certain monasteries each of whom, when in a state of trance, had faced towards the East and had thrown a white silk scarf in that direction, and by two portents. It is the custom in Tibet, in the case of the Dalai Lamas and of some others who have lived lives of eminent saintliness, not to dispose of the body after death in one of the several ways which are normal in Tibet, but to embalm it, in somewhat primitive fashion. Pending the completion of a fitting shrine the body of the thirteenth Dalai Lama, so embalmed, swathed in muslins, and the face covered by a lifelike effigy, had been placed on the throne of the lesser audience hall which looks South over the main courtyard of the Potala. Thousands came to see the dead body, touch the throne, and present a scarf. All night the hall would be securely locked. Twice it was found in the morning that the body, which the previous day had been facing South, had turned its head to the East. And to the East

of the new shrine, on a pillar of well-seasoned wood set in a great block of stone, and on the East side of the pillar, there appeared a giant fungus. Many other signs also indicated that the new Dalai Lama should be sought in the East.

The wise men set out

Accordingly, no positive reports having been received from any local authority in Tibet, it was decided that parties should be sent out Eastwards to make search. The Abbots of the Drepung, Sera, and Gandon monasteries prepared lists of Incarnation Lamas who might be sent; the State Oracle announced that the number of separate parties to be sent should be three and, the Regent having performed divination by means of his beads, it was decided that the Trulku (Incarnation) of the Phu-Phu-Chho monastery should proceed towards Takpo and the South-East; the Trulku of Kyitsang monastery towards Amdo in the North-East; and the Trulku of Kangse monastery East towards Kham and Chamdo. Another sign occurred when the Oracle of Samye, in a trance, gave his breastplate to Kyitsang Trulku in whose party were included the monk District Magistrate of Nagchuka, a civil official named Kheme-Se, a monk official named Tsetrang Lobsang, and some fifty servants.

From time to time during the next two and a half years reports became current in Lhasa that three, or five, or more boys who might be regarded as likely candidates had been discovered in various places. But the Regent and the Tibetan Government were silent.

Arrival of the new Dalai Lama

Early in the autumn of 1939 it became generally known in Lhasa that a young boy, in regard to whom there could be no possible doubt, had been found near Kumbum, and was expected to reach Nagchuka, ten days' march North-East of Lhasa, about the 20th September. On the 13th September, Shappe (Cabinet Minister) Bhondong with a party of Tibetan officials, which had been assembled secretly and in haste, left Lhasa for Nagchuka by forced marches, with the gilded sedan chair of the Dalai Lamas. It was important that the Dalai Lama should enter Lhasa before the end of the eighth month of the Tibetan year, the ninth month being the black month of the current Earth-Hare year. The occurrence of black months is determined by divination and astrology. Sometimes a whole year is found to be black.

Fast as Bhondong Shappe travelled, two officers, Kusho Ringang and Lachak Liushar, had pushed on a few marches ahead of him with a mule-litter in which, long before dawn on the morning of the 20th September, a sleeping child, accompanied by his family, Kyitsang Trulku and his associates, and a party of armed Chinese Mahomedan traders on their way to Mecca, was being hurried along towards Nagchuka by the light of lanterns. Bhondong Shappe also had been travelling through the night. A perfect day had just begun to dawn and signs of great good omen were lighting up the sky when the two parties met at Lung-Chung-Kyipup, "The Happy Nook". In token of reverence and homage Bhondong Shappe placed a white silk scarf in the hands of Kyitsang Trulku – for not even a Cabinet Minister may present a scarf direct to the Dalai Lama – and received one in exchange. It had been thought, that the child might still be asleep but, unprompted, he put out his hands between the curtains of the litter and laid them on Bhondong Shappe's head.

The sun was rising when three miles nearer Nagchuka at Ga-shi-na-mo-che, "The Pasture of the Four Joys" (where thirty years before the thirteenth Dalai Lama had been met on his return from China), the parents of the new Dalai Lama, who hitherto had been unaware that their son was anything more than one of several candidates, saw a crowd of standard bearers and officials, and an elaborate camp laid out in the form of a circle with a hollow centre. The Dalai Lama was taken to a throne which had been hurriedly constructed of dry clods of earth. Bhondong Shappe prostrated himself thrice, handed to the child a letter from the Regent acknowledging him as Dalai Lama, and – in Tibet significant deeds are usually preferred to any pronouncement in words – offered gifts which, while they can be presented to other Trulkus besides the Dalai Lama, can only be presented to the highest Trulku present. These were the Offering to All the Gods, in the form of a butter-cake with a number of turrets – which is called Mende; an image of Tse-pa-me, the god of endless life; a model of a Chorten; and a miniature holy book. He also made offerings of gold, silver, ceremonial garments, and rolls of silk and other materials. To the parents and other relations he presented dresses and jewellery. The child was then placed in the golden palanquin of the Dalai Lamas and the party set out to cover the remaining ten miles to Nagchuka, where the child, placed on the throne of the Dalai Lamas in the monastery which is called "The Palace of True Peace", held his first official reception. After a day's halt the journey was continued towards Lhasa. On the 6th October the young Dalai Lama reached Rigya, two miles East of Lhasa, where he was received with divine honours by the Regent and all important lay and ecclesiastical officials, and was met by representatives of the British Mission and of the Chinese, the Nepalese, and the Ladakhi Mahomedans resident in Lhasa. Two days later he entered Lhasa, where he was universally acclaimed as Dalai Lama, and visited the Great Temple. In the streets of Lhasa he was greeted by the two principal Oracles. Those who have seen a Tibetan Oracle in a trance will understand why people marvelled not at the fact that horses took fright but at the sight of a child who was entirely undisturbed. The Dalai Lama then proceeded to the private residence of the Dalai Lamas in the Norbhu Lingka, or Jewel Garden, which is on the outskirts of Lhasa.

The real facts of the discovery

The need for secrecy being past the actual facts of the discovery of the Dalai Lama and of subsequent events gradually became known. It is not necessary to pursue the fortunes of the search parties which proceeded towards Takpo and towards Kham. At Jeykundo the party under Kyitsang Trulku had come in touch with the late Tashi Lama who told them that he had heard of three remarkable boys. Proceeding thence to Amdo they were advised by the local Chinese Governor that there were, in different places, twelve other boys whose claims deserved investigation. The Tibetan Government had provided Kyitung Trulku with a number of articles which had belonged to the thirteenth Dalai Lama and with exact copies. It was anticipated that, as had happened at the discovery of former Dalai Lama, the genuine reincarnation would pick out the things which had belonged to his predecessor and would show other signs of super-human intelligence, and that the other children would fail in these tests. And so it proved. Of the nominees of the Tashi Lama one was found to have

died and the second, whom the Tashi Lama had been inclined particularly to favour, failed to display any interest in the things which had belonged to the late Dalai Lama, and ran away crying. But Kyitsang Trulku on approaching the home of the third of the Tashi Lama's nominees felt a great uplifting of heart. He found himself in surroundings already familiar from the description which the Regent had given of his vision in the lake; the three storied monastery with the golden roof and the turquoise tiles was found to be called after the saint Ka-ma-pa whose tomb was opposite the monastery (Ka-ma-pa might account for the second and third of the letters Ah. Kah. Mah); and from the monastery a twisting road led on East to a house such as the Regent had described.

In order to put the child to the test Kyitsang Trulku directed Tsetrang Lobsang to wear his ordinary dress, to pose as the head of the party, and to pretend that he had with him two servants, one being his ordinary monk attendant and the other Kyitsang Trulku, disguised as a servant. As interpreter the party had with them a young monk of the Kumbum monastery named Kesang who had recently learnt Tibetan when staying at the Sera monastery near Lhasa. The child of course knew no Tibetan. It had been arranged that the Tsetrang should go into the main room of the house, and that Kyitsang Trulku and the servant should wait in the ante-room which was used as a kitchen. But it so happened that the child was playing in the kitchen. When Kyitsang Trulku entered the child at once went up to him and said – "Lama, Lama", and, seizing a necklace (it had belonged to the thirteenth Dalai Lama) which Kyitsang was wearing round his neck and under his right arm, said "Mane, Mane". The interpreter monk then, pointing to the Tsetrang, said "Who is this?" and the child replied "Tsetrang". Being shown a hand and asked what it was he said "Lakpa" (which in Tibetan means "hand"), and being asked who the monk servant was he said "Sere Agha", which is stated to be the word used in Amdo for an ordinary monk.

Convinced in his own mind that he had found the genuine child, Kyitsang Trulku kept his counsel. He summoned the other principal members of his party (the District Magistrate of Nagchuka and Kheme Se) who had been making enquiries in another direction and, a few days later, having told them nothing, he took them to the house, with various possessions of the late Dalai Lama and exact copies. Out of four necklaces the child took the two which had belonged to the late Dalai Lama and put them round his own neck, and similarly out of two small drums he chose the right one, which he began to play. In the imitations he took no interest. There remained the choice between two walking sticks. The child first took the wrong one, examined it, shook his head, and dropped it. He then took the right one, and would not let it go. It was found also that the child, in common with his predecessor, possessed three of the physical signs which distinguish the incarnation of Chenrezi. When Kyitsang Trulku prepared to leave, the child took him by the hand and wanted to go with him, and wept at being left behind. It was related also that at the time of the birth of the child there had been a rainbow over the house.

These matters were reported to the Tibetan Government by Kyitsang Trulku, who stated that he was fully convinced that he had found the true Dalai Lama, and enquired whether there was any need to proceed to test the nominees of the Amban. The Tibetan Government replied about mid-summer 1938 by wireless instructing Kyitsang Trulku to bring the child to Lhasa for further test, and adding that he need not test any more children. More than that they would not say.

Ransom

Kyitsang Trulku tried to comply with this order, but he found that he was faced with serious difficulties. First the local Chinese Governor said that, unless he was assured that the boy was actually to be Dalai Lama, he could not let him go to Lhasa: but in time the matter was adjusted by a payment of 100,000 Chinese dollars (roughly equivalent to £7,000 to £8,000), out of which 30,000 were earmarked for the Kashag, or Cabinet, of the local Government of Silling; 30,000 for the local Commander-in-Chief; 30,000 for the Amban "for equipment for the war against Japan"; and 10,000 for the Kumbum monastery. This payment however merely served to sharpen appetites. On the arrival of the party at Kumbum monastery the monks, looking to the future reputation and profit of the monastery, insisted that the child must then and there be declared Dalai Lama; otherwise they could not let him go. The Chinese Governor also regretted that he had made a serious lapse in failing to bring to the notice of the Trulku that, the country being disturbed, an escort would be indispensable, and that an escort could not be produced except on the payment of expenses which at a minimum would amount to 100,000 dollars for the local Commander-in-Chief, 100,000 for officials of the Silling Government, and 20,000 for the troops who would actually provide the escort; to which must be added 10,000 for the Amban himself, and a further sum of 100,000 for the Kumbum monastery.

The upshot was that after negotiations which occupied a whole year, during which the party remained at Kumbum monastery, Kyitsang Trulku arranged to pay a further sum of 300,000 dollars through a party of rich Chinese Mahomedan traders who were about to proceed via Lhasa and India to Mecca, and for trade in India. In return for repayment at an advantageous rate in Lhasa or India, the traders undertook to escort Kyitsang Trulku and the child to Nagchuka, and to accompany them on to Lhasa.

It is believed on the other hand that the Chinese Government, through the Bureau of Mongolian and Tibetan Affairs, twice made a contribution, once of 5,000 dollars and once of 50,000 dollars, towards the expenses of the search and of the journey towards Tibet.

Cautious as the Tibetan Government had been up to this stage, it soon became apparent that their insistence on the child being brought to Lhasa merely as a candidate had been a matter of bluff. Actually the Regent, the Cabinet, the Committee of the National Assembly, and the representatives of the most important monasteries, had decided on the report of Kyitsang Trulku that the genuine Dalai Lama had been found, but in order that the Chinese Government might not force Chinese troops on Tibet, under the excuse of providing an escort for the child, and in order that Church and State, in Tibet, and no external authority, might determine the genuineness and recognition of the Dalai Lama, all had been sworn to secrecy. And the secret had been well kept.

The fourteenth Dalai Lama

The Dalai Lama was born on the 6th June 1935, (judged by physical and mental development he might well be at least a year older), his original name being Phamo Dhondup, son of Chog Chu Tsering and of Sonamtso, both of whom are aged about

40. The names of the parents are typically Tibetan and they are of Tibetan race. Their language does not appear to be either Chinese or Tibetan. The eldest brother of the Dalai Lama is Taktse Trulku, whose accession as Incarnation Lama of the Kumbum monastery was determined by the thirteenth Dalai Lama. His other brothers, aged about 12 and 8, are named Gyalo Dhondup and Lobsang Samten. He has also a sister who is married in Amdo.

On the 23rd November the Dalai Lama proceeded in state from the Norbhu Lingka to the Great Temple where on the next day he and his next elder brother were initiated as monks and the Dalai Lama was renamed Jetsun Jampel Gnawang Lobsang Yishey Tenzing Gyatso – “The Holy One, The Tender Glory, Mighty in Speech, of Excellent Intellect, of Absolute Wisdom, Holding the Doctrine, The Ocean-wide”. On that day the Dalai Lama received the minor seal of the Dalai Lamas which is named the Gya-tam.

The Dalai Lama returned from the Temple to the Norbhu Lingka, where, in his capacity as Dalai Lama, he frequently granted audience and conferred blessing. All were struck by the fixity of his gaze, his personality, and the extraordinary attention and deftness with which he performed his priestly duties of attending to ceremonial, granting blessing, and knotting scarves to be conferred on those deemed worthy of this special honour. All who saw him were convinced that he was the one and only true fourteenth Dalai Lama. Those in close attendance on him noted his preference for associates of the late Dalai Lama, his special kindness to the late Dalai Lama’s servants, and his love of music and of flowers.

The return to the throne

In Tibetan religious and political theory, the individuals who are the human embodiments of the Dalai-hood die, but the Dalai-hood persists. The emergence of a Dalai Lama is therefore in essence the return of one, who has been temporarily absent, to resume an authority, and functions, which are already his own. The culminating event in the assumption, or resumption, of authority by a Dalai Lama (subject to the continuance of the Regency during minority) is the occupation by him of the Golden Throne of the Dalai Lamas in the Potala. This ceremony the Tibetans call the Ser-Thri-Nga-Sol. The Meaning of the four syllables, in inverse order, is prayer or request; possession or occupation; throne; gold. Nga-sol is a word in everyday use in Lhasa in the sense of a visit of congratulation to a person whose appointment to an office by the Tibetan Government has already been announced. Nga-tak means one, such as a high Lama, who, possessing the Buddhist religion, is able to give it out to others. The conventional English rendering of Ser-Thri-Nga-Sol, Installation, is thus not a close equivalent, and it tends both to suggest irrelevant western parallels and also to indicate too active an interference by man in a ceremony which in its essence is the celebration of a return – not from the dead, but of one who cannot die. Perhaps “The Return to the Throne” is as close an approximation to the meaning of the Tibetan word as can be found.

In fixing dates for this ceremony, which would last several days, the Tibetan Government had to take two main considerations into account. Divination and astrology had indicated suitable occasions in the first, third, and fifth months of the New Year, which was due to begin on the 9th February 1940. And it would be the desire of as

many Tibetans as possible from all parts of the country to be present. The New Year, with the annual celebrations of the driving out of the evil influences of the Old Year, the bringing in of the New Year, and the twenty-one days of the Great Prayer, a period of frequent and magnificent religious observances intermixed with traditional pageantry, always attracts to Lhasa tens of thousands of monks, pilgrims, and villagers, so that the normal population of the city is trebled or quadrupled. Cold as the month of February is in Tibet, it is reckoned that by the end of January the period of the coldest snaps – of which according to Tibetan tradition there are normally three – is past, and it is the season at which, the harvest and the threshing finished, the land not yet ready for the plough, and flocks of sheep needing little attention, Tibetans are best able to make holiday. It is also the time at which the thirteenth Dalai Lama used normally to leave the Norbhu Lingka to take up his residence at the Potala for some weeks. And it is a time when all Tibetans, wherever they may be observing the New Year, direct their thoughts towards the Golden Throne. It was thus for many good reasons, and with consideration for the happiness of all in Tibet, that the Tibetan Government fixed the first month, and the dates in the first month which had been declared to be most auspicious for the entry of the Dalai Lama into the Potala, and for the occupation by the Dalai Lama of the throne of his predecessors.

The Chinese delegation

Early in December 1939 there arrived in India His Excellency Mr. Wu Chung Hsin, Chairman of the Bureau of Mongolian and Tibetan Affairs, accompanied by Mr. Hsi Luen and a large party. After a short stay in Calcutta and at Darjeeling and Kalimpong, and at Gangtok the capital of Sikkim, they proceeded with a train of sedan-chairs, ponies, mules, and gifts, to the Indian border at the Nathu La pass and thence via Yatung, Phari, the Tang La pass, Gyantse, and the Karo La and Nyaptso La passes, and across the Tsangpo river, to Lhasa, where they arrived on the 15th January. Particularly for men, some of them well past their youth and all unaccustomed to height, a mid-winter journey of 22 stages over four passes ranging from 14,000 to nearly 17,000 feet indicated courage; but they had the good fortune which they deserved and actually until about the time of the Tibetan New Year conditions for travelling, although cold, proved to be exceptionally favourable, with a large proportion of sunny days, no snow, and comparatively little wind. Even so it was good news when Mr. Wu Chung Hsin reported that he and his party had arrived at Lhasa safe and sound.

The British delegation

The duty of conveying the felicitations of His Majesty's Government and of His Excellency the Viceroy to the Dalai Lama and to the Government and people of Tibet was entrusted to Mr. B. J. Gould, the Political Officer in Sikkim. He had been in charge of the British Mission which, by invitation of the Tibetan Government, visited Lhasa in the summer of 1936, a distinguished Member of the Mission on that occasion being Brigadier Philip Neame, V.C. Since Mr. Gould's departure from Lhasa shortly after the Tibetan New Year in 1937 the Mission had been continued on a reduced scale in charge alternately of Mr. H. E. Richardson and of Rai Bahadur

Norbhu Dhondup, who has to tax his memory and his mathematics to reckon how many times he has visited Lhasa. The party was therefore not large, Mr. Gould being accompanied by Captain Staunton of the Indian Medical Service and Rai Sahib Sonam Tobden, and being joined later for a short period by Major Keys and Captain Thornburgh from Gyantse. Rai Bahadur Norbhu holds by courtesy the Tibetan title of Dzasa, which places him next below Cabinet rank, and Rai Sahib Sonam that of Depon, or Colonel.

The weather which had smiled on Mr. Wu Chung Hsin was favourable also to the British travellers. At Yatung an old and great friend was met in the person of Tsarong Dzasa, who had been obliged to undertake the journey to India on account of the health of his wife, whose hospitality to members of the British Mission had never failed. Thirty years before, as a young man, he had justified his position as Favourite of the thirteenth Dalai Lama by a display of marked bravery in covering the flight of his master, from the Chinese in Lhasa, to India.

On the way occasion was taken to renew old associations by visiting, on the lower slopes of Mount Chumolhari near Phari, a monastery at which the late Dalai Lama had been met on his return from India to Lhasa in 1912. The consideration of the Tibetan Government was shown by the appointment as "Official Guide" from Gyantse to Lhasa of Kusho Dingja, who as Dzungpen of Shigatse holds the most important District charge under the control of the Central Government; by the excellence of the arrangements made for the journey; and by the provision on arrival of a large guard of honour drawn from the Trapchi Regiment. A further gracious act was the appointment, as Official Guides for the period to be spent at Lhasa, of Kusho Kheme-se, who had been chief assistant to Kyitsang Trulku in his successful search for the Dalai Lama, and of Tsendron Gyantsen Choda, an experienced monk official.

Tibetan ceremonial

The Tibetans are amongst the most natural people in the world. It is the same with their dress, ceremonies, and buildings. While there is a prescribed apparel for each rank and for many different occasions, there is usually no exact pattern or design which must be followed: ceremonies progress with the same naturalness and ease as the flow of a stream; the Potala is entirely intimate with its surroundings and purpose.

Sometimes one may aim at preserving this Tibetan naturalness by a choice of words. Thus "The Return to the Throne" has been preferred to "The Installation". In the same way "The Great Temple" or "The Temple" is perhaps a better rendering than "The Cathedral" for what the Tibetans call "the House of the Great Altar" or "The House of God", which older than the Potala, continues to be the centre of much of the religious and political life of Tibet. What counts for most in the ceremonies which take place at Lhasa is the atmosphere of awe, joy, reverence, love, exaltation, and not seldom of fun, which surrounds them.

Driving out the old year

On the 7th February a great crowd of the inhabitants of Lhasa and of visitors from all parts of Tibet, together with many of the British, Chinese, Nepalese, and other

foreigners in Lhasa, crowded the roofs and galleries which surround the main court of the Potala to witness the annual ceremony of the driving out of the evil influences of the Old Year. In turn a hundred monks with gleaming censers, cymbals, and golden drums, Hashang the genial God of good luck with his troupe of minute attendants in masks, black-hat dancers, and the many other participants in the day-long ceremony, entered the court-yard, down the steep steps which lead from the inner recesses of the Potala. It is only the Dalai Lama and Hashang who may use the central flight of steps. Above, set in the hundred-foot face of the main building, were embrasures and balconies, in three perpendicular rows and four tiers, gay with silk fringes floating in the breeze and with dresses of every colour. In the centre of the highest tier, outside the smaller assembly hall where the embalmed body of the late Dalai Lama had lain pending the completion of its golden shrine, was the still empty balcony of the Dalai Lama. To its right was the Regent, invisible most of the time behind thin gold curtains. Elsewhere, according to their rank, were seated the Cabinet, and monk and lay officials of different grades. Many turned their eyes to the place where, next to the Cabinet, the family of the Dalai Lama were to be seen, keenly interested in their first experience of Tibetan pageantry on a great scale.

New Year's Day

On the 9th February the members of the British Mission, alone of foreigners, were privileged to witness the religious celebration of the New Year in the main hall of the Potala. They presented silk scarves at the vacant throne of the Dalai Lama and to the Regent and the Prime Minister, and shared in the ceremonial tea and food which are then served. Other foreigners attended the less religious ceremony of the next day. And thus, for several days, the observances of the New Year pursued their customary course.

Visit to the Dalai Lama

A few days after his arrival Mr. Wu Chung Hsin had been received by the Dalai Lama at the Norbhu Lingka. The 13th February was fixed for the reception of the British Mission. It was a calm and brilliant morning. A powdering of fresh snow had fallen on the hills round Lhasa but a foretaste of spring was in the air. Bar-headed geese, mallard, teal, goosander, and Brahmini duck, aware of the security of the Lhasa valley, were making much of the opportunities afforded by the melting of the ice on the side-streams of the Kyichu. To members of the British party the Norbhu Lingka was already familiar and well-loved ground owing to the kindness of the Regent who had allowed them free and frequent access to every part of the Jewel Garden when, three years before, it had been unoccupied.

The hall in which the Dalai Lama grants audiences at the Norbhu Lingka is a simple room of moderate size, lighted from a central square well supported on painted pillars. The walls, dim behind the pillars, are covered with frescoes in oil paint. In the interval between the death of the thirteenth Dalai Lama and the arrival of the fourteenth the throne had been vacant, but always the room had been kept as in the time of the thirteenth, with fresh food ready by the throne, fresh holy water in brass bowls, and pots of such flowers as were in season. The court-yard outside was thronged with

monks on duty and other monks who had come to receive a blessing, and beyond the court-yard there had gathered a small crowd of men, women and children, villagers from near Lhasa, and shepherds wearing a single garment of sheepskin with the wool inside, their homes indicated by feature and dialect and by the different styles in which the women plait their hair and by the variety of their ornaments.

On entering the audience room it was seen that the Dalai Lama, a solid solemn but very wide awake boy, red-cheeked and closely shorn, wrapped warm in the maroon-red robes of a monk and in outer coverings, was seated high on his simple throne, cross-legged in the attitude of Buddha. Below and round him on the graded steps of the throne, looking like giants in comparison with the child, were five abbots – the Chikyab Khenpo, who is the head of the Ecclesiastical Department in Tibet and ranks as a Cabinet Minister; the Dron-yer Chempo, who deals with all applications for audience with the Dalai Lama; Kyitsang Trulku, who discovered the Dalai Lama; the Zimpon Khenpo, Lord of the Bed-chamber, who when he was District Magistrate of Nagchuka had assisted Kyitsang Trulku in the search; and the Sopön Khenpo, who is responsible for the Dalai Lama's food.

On the steps below the throne, to right and left, were pots of sprouting barley and of the pink primula – malacoids – which seems always to be ready to find a new home. First, and then again, and so long as the Dalai Lama was in the room, those who had known the thirteenth Dalai Lama realised the truth of the report that the new Dalai Lama seems to recognise the associates of his predecessor. All observed the extraordinary steadiness of his gaze, and his absorption in the task which he has in hand. The next thing noticed was the devotion and love, almost passing the love of women, of the Abbots who attend him. Next, perhaps, the beauty of his hands. And meanwhile all had become aware that they were in the presence of a Presence.

First came some of those few who might expect the two-handed blessing; then monks, who, down to the most junior, are entitled to the blessing by one hand; and then the laity, villagers, and shepherds, each with his small offering of at least a shred of white scarf and a few coins, some to receive the blessing by two hands or by one but most to have their foreheads touched by one of the Abbots in attendance with a tassel of bright silk ribbons which had been blessed by the Dalai Lama.

After a time the column of those seeking a blessing was held back and the members and staff and servants of the British Mission, not all of them Buddhists, approached the throne in turn, the ladies headed by Mrs. Norbhu. The leader of the party presented a scarf, a scarf which had been blessed was placed round his neck, and two small cool firm hands were laid steadily on his head. The other members of the party followed in turn.

Twice tea, and once rice, were served, as a form of mutual hospitality which was also a sacrament. At the first serving of tea the Sopön Khenpo, Abbot of the kitchen, advanced, produced his box-wood tea-bowl from the folds of his dress, and tasted the tea to make sure that it was not poisoned. Then the Dalai Lama was served, and then all present. On the second occasion Rai Bahadur Norbhu – on behalf of the British Mission who were permitted to provide the second tea and the food of the day – advanced and performed the same duty. Meanwhile the British Mission had produced some few gifts – a gold clock with a nightingale that pops out and sings, a pedal motor car, and a tricycle. These things certainly did divert the attention of the Dalai Lama even from those who had been known to his former incarnation.

And so the audience ended. The Dalai Lama was lifted down from his throne by the Chikyab Khenpo and left the hall of audience, holding the hands of two Abbots who towered on either side of him, but looking back at the things which had gripped his attention. Within a minute his eight year old brother was on the spot to find out how everything worked, and additionally keen and anxious because, as he said, if he did not at once find out all about everything his four year old brother would certainly beat him. It appears that the Dalai Lama has a strong will and is already learning to exercise the privileges of his position. The little monk was soon going round the smooth floor of the audience chamber in the pedal car. An outstanding virtue of Tibetans is that they hold that a place which is sacred may also be a place for fun. The visit ended with congratulations to Kyitsang Trulku on his great discovery.

Other visits

On other days visits were paid to the Regent (whose official title changes, once a Dalai Lama has been found, from Gye-tsap, or Vice-roy, to Si-Kyung or Governor); to the Prime Minister; and to the Kashag (Cabinet), which derives its name from the "order room" at the Great Temple in which it meets.

Then to the Norbhu Lingka again, to return the calls of the Chikyab Khenpo and the Dronyer Chempo, and to meet the parents of the Dalai Lama. Modestly housed, the Chikyab Khenpo seems to subordinate all other cares of Church and State to what is now his one main purpose in life – to serve his young master and to help him to grow up in the way in which, as the earthly habitation of Chenrezi and the Lord and High Priest of Tibet, he should go. With the Chikyab Khenpo, as at the reception a few days before, one felt the atmosphere, and almost the music, of "Unto us a son is born . . . and the Government shall be upon his shoulders". His face lights up as he talks of the love of the thirteenth Dalai Lama for birds, beasts and flowers, of his kindness to those who served him, and of how these gifts appear to have been inherited by the present Dalai Lama. The Dronyer Chempo is equally at one with the task to which it has pleased Providence to call him. He has wide experience and was a member of the staff of Lonchen Shatra at the time of the Simla negotiations in 1914.

The Dalai Lama's family

In Amdo those who can afford it marry young and, in addition to the parents and the two brothers of the Dalai Lama aged 12 and 8, there was the elder brother's little wife, a most attractive girl of about the same age as her husband. The eight-year old brother, who became a monk on the same day as the Dalai Lama, seemed fully to realise that, having met members of the Mission before, it fell to him to break the ice, and he was soon busy playing "Is Mr. Fox at home?" The mother is identifiable in Lhasa as the one lady who dresses in the Amdo style and wears her hair in three plaits. The father is a man of quiet and gentle poise, with a serious face on which smiles go "out and in". The mother is surely one in a million, the worthy mother of a Dalai Lama. The children are sturdy and intelligent and, as might be expected, have easily outdistanced their parents in learning Tibetan. No family could appear to be more closely knit. The happiness in their faces must stand for real happiness in their lives and for those with whom they come in contact.

The holy walk

While almost each day of the New Year had its particular religious or secular observance, thousands of men, women, and children, some with pet sheep and some with dogs, and most of them turning prayer-wheels in their hands, were daily performing the five mile circuit of the holy walk round the Potala – some walking, some, in coarse leather gauntlets and aprons and with patches of mud or dust on forehead nose and chin, by prostration, and some by prostration sideways. When a rest is needed, or it is time to break off for the day, a stone is set to mark the forward limit of the last prostration. A sacred rock, painted with many hundred figures of Lord Buddha and other devices, overlooks a turning point in the holy walk and the garden of the Dekyi Lingka, or Strand of Peace, where, by kindness of the Tibetan Government and of the Abbot of the Kundeling Monastery, the British Mission is housed.

Along the road from the Norbhu Lingka to the Potala, which passes the Dekyi Lingka on another side, there were signs of increasing activity from day to day. Ponies, mules, and the carriers of the Dalai Lama's golden palanquin were being practised for the state entry into the Potala.

Entry of the Dalai Lama into the Potala

The Dalai Lama has enjoyed kingly good fortune in regard to weather. In Tibet this is not a simple matter, a fresh fall of snow, which is auspicious for an occasion of state, being considered inauspicious for a wedding or on New Year's Day. It was just such another morning as that of the thirteenth February when, eight days later, a mile-long riot of colour assembled to escort the Dalai Lama from the Norbhu Lingka for his official entry into the Potala. At dawn almost every person in Lhasa who would not be on duty in the procession or at the Potala had set out to take up a position on the route. This leads from the main gate of the Norbhu Lingka along an avenue of poplar trees, across the Holy Walk, and on, past the Kundeling monastery and the bare hill on which the College of Lamaistic Medicine stands, to near the city gate with its strings of tinkling bells. Here were assembled many ladies of the chief families in Lhasa, gay in headdresses set with seed pearls coral and turquoise, over which were looped the black coils of their long hair – eight-inch ear ornaments of turquoise cut flat and set in gold gem-set charm boxes – silk robes of every colour, with silk shirt sleeves of some contrasting colour turned back over the wrist – a cascade of pearls and gems over the right shoulder – and, in the case of married women or grown up girls, an apron in rainbow stripes of green, red, purple, green, gold, green, purple, or whatever succession of bright colours the individual weaver had chosen. Nor in Tibet is it the rich only whose women on a day of festival are gay, and in Tibet all spectacles are free to all.

Leaving the city gate to the right, the routes sweeps right-handed round the base of the Potala, past the high wall and blue lake of the Snake Temple, on past the Northern face of the Potala, and up the broad ascent, alternate steps and stone-paved slopes, which forms the Southern approach. Along the route were men and women tending incense crocks, set on walls or carried on arm or shoulder, fed with artemisia and other fragrant herbs; troupes of strolling dancers, some in head-dresses like Red Indians, some in masks; mummers; bands and drummers; clean-featured shepherds

dressed in sheepskin, their broad-browed and plump wives wearing their hair in a hundred closely plaited ringlets; monks of every age from four years upwards in maroon robes, often tattered; beggars; farmers; – thousands turning prayer-wheels of every device and size.

The procession

First came servants, on ponies and on foot, dressed in green tunics, blue breeches and broad red tasseled hats, carrying the Dalai Lama's food, kitchen ware, garments, and bed clothes; grooms, to be ready for their masters at the Potala; attendants carrying tall banners to ward off evil spirits; some members of the Chinese delegation; high Lamas followed by the State Oracle and the Chief Secretaries; the led ponies of the Dalai Lama in gorgeous silk trappings; the head-monks of the Potala monastery in claret robes fringed with gold and silver embroidery; junior lay officials in their long "geluche" mantles of many colours, black skirts, and white boat-shaped hats set sideways on the head and tied down under the ears; lay officers in ascending order of rank, Teijis, Dzasas, Shappes, all stiff in heavy brocade. And then, through the clouds of incense which were drifting across the route, and between lines of standard bearers, came two long double lines of men in loose green uniforms and red hats with white plumes, holding draw-ropes – which would be needed for the climb up the Potala –, and men in red with yellow hats, bearing, as they moved with short shuffling steps, the yokes which supported the poles of the Dalai Lama's great golden palanquin. The child was invisible behind gold curtains and bright bunches of paper flowers. To his right rear was carried the tall peacock umbrella which is the privilege of the Dalai Lamas. Next came the Regent, under a gold umbrella, dressed in robes of golden silk and a yellow conical hat trimmed with black fox-skin, his horse weighed down with trappings and led by two grooms; then the Dalai Lama's father, mother and brothers; then Abbots and Trulkus from monasteries throughout Tibet, in peaked hats and wrapped in coats of gold brocade worn over maroon robes. It was seen that some Incarnate Lamas, boys as young as the Dalai Lama himself, were firmly tied to their saddles. Towards the end of the procession came more civil officials, seniors leading, in the traditional geluche travelling dress; more monk officials; and finally a giant monk door-keeper of the Potala monastery who with stentorian voice kept back the dense crowds of monks, citizens, and villagers, who, after the manner of spectators everywhere, were closing in from the sides of the route to accompany the Dalai Lama on his progress.

The Ser-Thri-Nga-Sol

On arrival at the Potala the Dalai Lama proceeded to his private apartments, to rest before the ceremonies of the following days. For several days in succession, and again, after an interval, for several more days, he would occupy the golden throne of the Dalai Lamas, confer blessings, and receive gifts. The first day, the 22nd February, was the occasion on which the Tibetan Government, both Church and State, would dominate the proceedings in its official capacity and as a whole. Other days, when also all principal officials of Church and State would be present, were allotted for special participation, and presentation of gifts, by the Regent, the Chinese delegation, and others.

The Tibetan Government proposed that the British Mission should attend with their gifts on the second day and enquired whether they would desire to be present on the first day also. They were careful to point out that there was no question of the British Mission not being welcome on the first day. The question for consideration was whether a more personal appearance on the first day, when there would be no occasion for the presentation of gifts, would tend to detract from the effect of a more official, and also more intimate, appearance on the second day, when there would be an opportunity for the presentation with due ceremony of the gifts which were to be offered in token of the felicitations and goodwill of His Majesty's Government and of the Viceroy of India.

In matters of ceremony it is usually safe to be guided by the implied wishes of the Tibetan Government, who are past masters in all that falls within the sphere of courtesy and consideration. It was therefore decided that the British Mission should attend on the second day only, in company with their good friends, the representatives of Tashi Lhunpo, and there has been no reason to regret the decision. The record of the events of the first day is however based not on personal knowledge but on the evidence of many who were present.

The Potala is the ancient and definite seat of authority in Tibet, and it is not until he has entered the Potala that the Dalai Lama receives the Great Seal.

The essence of the Ser-Thri-Nga-Sol is the public and definitive acknowledgement of his people by the Dalai Lama, and of the Dalai Lama by his people. Probably there is no ceremony in the Western world which is at all nearly equivalent, but there are affinities to many ceremonies which we know. There are elements of the assertion by all of their duty towards their God-King, and of the God-King's duty towards his people; of a long drawn out "God Save The King. Long Live The King"; of mystical unions and of mutual society help and comfort; and most certainly of communion and of joy and thanksgiving. The scene carried one back also to the great Durbar at Delhi, when King George and Queen Mary sat to receive the homage of those who were already their loyal subjects and to uplift them by their presence. But it was inevitable that thought should travel also to another child, already God Incarnate when, lying in a manger, He was offered gifts of gold and frankincense and myrrh, or when He first visited the Temple which was already His.

The first day

By three o'clock on the morning of the twenty-second of February all Lhasa was awake and under a misty moon almost at the full hundreds of officials of Church and State were setting out, with attendants carrying lanterns, to ascend the steep slope of the Potala which loomed in its glory above the city. As some newspapers, which must presumably have relied on imaginative advance "copy", have published accounts of events which did not occur, the scene may be described in some detail.

The main audience hall of the Potala – in which the Anglo-Tibetan Treaty of 1904 was signed – is a great square room, wholly-enclosed, lighted from a central well supported on great painted wooden pillars round which, in frequent repetition, are hung the eight lucky signs. What appears to be the North wall, but is really a screen, advanced several feet from the actual wall, is covered with hangings of silk applique work which depict various religious scenes. Against it is set the seven-foot-high throne,

or rather seat, of the Dalai Lamas. The other three walls, which are set back much farther behind the pillars of the central well than the North screen, are covered with oil paintings, barely visible even by day.

Long before the Dalai Lama was due to arrive, the dimly lighted rooms began to fill. To the right of the throne, against the North wall, seated on low cushions, were the principal monk Secretaries of the Tibetan Government, and the State Oracle. To their right front, near the top of the West side of the square, was placed the moderately raised throne of the Regent, and more to the right, the seat of the Prime Minister. Half right from the throne, across the space by which the Dalai Lama was to enter, sat the Abbots of Monasteries, wrapped in mantles of brocade over their maroon robes, several Incarnation Lamas, and other monks. On the South side of the open central square were the raised cushions on which would sit, in order of seniority from right to left as they faced the throne, the Cabinet Ministers and other Civil Officials. To the left of the throne, with their backs to the North wall, sat the father, monk brother, mother, elder brother, and brother's wife, of the Dalai Lama. On the remaining, East, side of the square, at right angles to the family of the Dalai Lama, and with the throne of the Dalai Lama to the right front, and facing the seats of the Regent, Prime Minister, and Abbots on the other side of the square, are the places usually reserved for those who are to be granted special audience. In these places, on cushions, were seated members of the Chinese delegation, the Nepalese representative and his staff, the Bhutanese representative, and the chief of the Mahomedan Ladakhi traders whose original home is in Kashmir. Mr. Wu Ching Hsin, the Chairman of the Chinese Bureau of Mongolian and Tibetan Affairs was provided with a raised seat slightly in advance of the places occupied by the other members of the Chinese delegation, his back to the throne and to the family of the Dalai Lama.

An hour and a half before dawn the members of the Cabinet and other high officials had assembled for a first ceremonious drinking of tea in a small hall outside the private apartment of the Dalai Lama. It was still an hour before dawn when in the main hall a giant lictor, with a voice like the roar of a bull, and swaying a golden incense censer, ordered silence. All stood, while attendants entered the hall bearing warm wrappings which they arranged reverently on the throne. Other attendants then entered and laid a white carpet bearing the eight lucky signs from the main entrance to the front of the throne. After a pause there was a blare of trumpets. The door was opened and there entered at a brisk pace a small figure, in golden robes and pointed yellow hat with long flaps over the ears, his hands held by the Chikyab Khenpo and the Kalon Lama. With their help he quickly climbed the lower steps in front of the throne, and he was then lifted by the Chikyab Khenpo to the top of the throne and made warm and comfortable in his wrappings. After the Dalai Lama there had come the Regent, dressed in yellow silk, the Prime Minister and the Trulku of the Takta monastery who with the Regent is responsible for the education of the Dalai Lama and next the members of the Cabinet, dressed in heavy gold brocade and fur hats, and other Civil Officials according to rank. On entering all prostrated themselves before the Dalai Lama. The same five high ecclesiastics who had been in attendance at the reception at the Norbhu Lingka stationed themselves on the steps of the throne, the Regent proceeded to his own throne, and all present took their seats.

The ceremony

Monks of the Potala Monastery advanced and in low tones, little more than a mumble, offered prayer for the long life and prosperity of the Dalai Lama. At intervals in the prayer civil officers dressed as monks – maintaining a right established in the days of the Kings of Tibet but yielding to the religious character of the occasion in the matter of dress – presented to the Dalai Lama the eight lucky signs. Then the Regent uttered words in praise of the Dalai Lama, and wishing him a prosperous reign. He prostrated himself three times before the throne, advanced slowly up the steps of the throne, and offered a white silk scarf which was received on behalf of the Dalai Lama by the Chikyab Khenpo. The Regent and the Dalai Lama then saluted one another by touching forehead to forehead, and the Regent, having received a silk scarf from the Chikyab Khenpo, withdrew to his throne.

After the Regent came the Prime Minister and members of the Cabinet, the family of the Dalai Lama – his mother and little sister-in-law being the only women present in the great assembly – Abbots of monasteries, Incarnation Lamas, a troupe of dancing boys who were to take part in the ceremony, and officials of Church and State. On some the Dalai Lama conferred blessing with both hands, other officials and all monks received the blessing with one hand, and the more lowly received the blessing by tassel, held by the Chikyab Khenpo. Each after passing the throne proceeded to offer a scarf to the Regent and to receive his blessing, and presented a scarf to the Prime Minister. For junior officials and the public the traditional method of approach to the throne is in a close packed swaying line, single file, knees bent, body touching body. The ceremony was essentially similar to that of New Year's Day, except that now the throne of the Dalai Lama was no longer empty, and the numbers seeking blessing were so great that the ceremony lasted five hours.

After the Incarnation Lamas had received blessing, the line of those approaching the throne was interrupted to make a place for Mr. Wu Chung Hsin and members of the Chinese delegation.

Meanwhile at intervals two Abbots engaged in shrill debate, each point as it was made being emphasised by crashing the right hand down into or across the left, by the hitching of cloak on shoulder, or by a shrill scream. From time to time tea was served, first to the Dalai Lama from a golden urn with dragon spout – after being first tasted ceremonially as a precaution against poison – and afterwards to all present, each person producing a wooden bowl from the folds of his dress. Rice also was handed round, and barley porridge, and finally large portions of seethed meat. Three times the ceremony of blessing was suspended to make way for the troupe of twelve dancing boys, gaily dressed and armed with jade battle-axes, who postured in stiff attitudes, made sudden leaps, and finally shuffled out backwards. Towards the end, great piles of sweetmeats, and of pastry bread moulded into fantastic forms, and entire dried carcasses of yaks, bulls, and sheep, often complete with horns and tails, and of glistening pigs from which the bristles had been singed, were set out on some fifty low tables in the middle of the hall. There was a wild rush of servants of the Potala and other poor to seize what is deemed to be food from the Dalai Lama's own table, and each secured what he could, in spite of a great show of violence on the part of tall attendants armed with whips. There was another dance and another debate, the Dalai Lama sent silk scarves to the principal persons present, and the white carpet with the

lucky signs, which had been rolled up after his entry, was unrolled between the throne and the doorway. The Dalai Lama was lifted down from his throne, and withdrew as he had come, holding the hands of the Kalon Lama and the Chikyab Khenpo. All then dispersed, the high officials for another ceremonial drinking of tea, and others to their homes.

[It is to be noted that, the ceremony being essentially religious, the usual practice has been that when the Dalai Lama desires that special consideration should be shown to an individual, such as a Cabinet Minister on his appointment, or to the representative of a foreign country, such person or representative should approach the throne at a late stage in the proceedings. It is understood that on the evening of the 21st February the Chinese delegation expressed a desire to be present on the 22nd, and that they insisted on approaching the throne at an earlier stage. The Nepalese and the Bhutanese representatives, who were aware of the proper procedure, awaited the correct moment, and the Ladakhi Mahomedans who were also present did likewise. It is believed that in the result Mr. Wu Chung Hsin was dissatisfied with his part in the proceedings, and with his seat. He did not himself attend when the gifts of the Chinese Government were presented a few days later. There was no occasion for a second attendance by the representative of Nepal because the Nepalese gifts had not arrived.]

Gifts from England and India

The Tibetan Government had been happy in their suggestion that the presentation by the British Mission of felicitations and gifts on behalf of His Majesty's Government and His Excellency the Viceroy should take place on the following day, the 22nd February – the first of the days available for participation in the Ser-Thri-Nga-Sol by particular interests, and a day of general rejoicing, being the fifteenth of the Tibetan first month, and full moon. It was also a happy thought, fraught it may be hoped with good augury for the future, that the representatives both of Tashi Lhunpo and of His Highness the Maharaja of Sikkim, the only Buddhist State in India, should be associated with the British Mission in offerings to the new occupant of the Golden Throne. Snow had fallen during the night and the hills which surround the Lhasa valley were silver-bright when at eight o'clock in the morning the British Mission, some fifty persons in all, set out, in uniforms of many kinds, to ride on stocky Tibetan ponies, shaggy in their winter coats, along the road which leads from the Norbhu Lingka past the Kundeling Monastery and the main city gate to the Potala. In front rode the two official guides, one in the voluminous maroon robes and gold-tipped conical hat of a monk official, the other in scarlet cloak turned back with sky-blue, and yellow sponge-bag hat. Particularly for the latter, Kheme-Se, who had taken part in the discovery of the Dalai Lama, it was a great day. Then came orderlies in scarlet, some with broad hats fringed with tassels of red silk and some in the conical cane-work hats with peacock feathers, and the home-made kilts, which are the national dress of the Lepchas of Sikkim. Rai Bahadur Norbhu was resplendent in the stiff brocade suitable to his rank as Dzasa, and Rai Sahib Sonam in the golden robes of a Depon. A crowd of pilgrims acquiring merit, by performing the five-mile circuit of the Holy Walk made way for the procession to pass, and later from the heights of the Potala, it was seen that many thousands were engaged in the same pious task.

In the interval before the ceremony was due to begin there was time to greet Tibetan friends as they arrived and to take in afresh the rich detail of the assembly hall. To the right of the Dalai Lama's seven foot throne stood his golden table, inset with great rubies and hundreds of turquoises and pearls. In a long ante-room were being set out the gifts which were to be offered that day. Those from His Majesty's Government and the Viceroy included a brick of gold, fresh from the Calcutta Mint. Other gifts were such as, in the light of experience, were likely to be appreciated – ten bags of silver, three rifles, six rolls of broad cloth of different colours, a gold watch and chain; field glasses, an English Saddle, a picnic case, three stoves, a musical box, and a hammock. The formal list which had to be handed in included also two pairs of budgerigars – of which more later. The Maharaja of Sikkim's list included two horses and a number of woven and other products of the Sikkim State. But for picturesqueness and romance pride of place must be given to the traditional gifts of Tashi Lhunpo. Each in the reverent care of a separate monk, there were figures of Lord Buddha and of Chenrezi and of other deities, warmly wrapped in coloured silks; holy books; sets of golden silk clothes for the Dalai Lama; sets of the eight lucky signs in gold and in silver; a six-foot elephant tusk; a rhinoceros horn set in silver; bags of gold dust; silver ingots of the shape, and perhaps the size, of Cinderella's slippers; many rolls of silk and of cloth; and provisions of every kind.

Meanwhile the assembly hall had filled and on re-entering it was felt that, solemn and magnificent as the ceremonial might be, the atmosphere was intimate. Seated on the raised cushions to the left front of the throne, the British Mission had as its near neighbours, a few feet to the right, the family of the Dalai Lama.

The Dalai Lama entered at a quick pace, holding the hands of the Kalon Lama and the Chikyab Khenpo. He seemed not to be at all tired by the long ceremony of the day before. Prayer was offered in low tones by the Regent and by the Chief Abbot of Tashi Lhunpo, who is the present head of the Tashi Lhunpo administration. The Regent then prostrated himself, saluted the Dalai Lama by touching brow to brow, and returned to his seat. The Chief Abbot of Tashi Lhunpo again offered prayer, prostrated, advanced to the throne, presented to the Dalai Lama through the Chikyab Khenpo the same ceremonial gifts – Mende, image of Tsemape, holy book, and chorten – which had been offered by Bhondong Shappe near Nagchuka, and received blessing. The other representatives of Tashi Lhunpo followed, and meanwhile hundreds of servants of the Tashi Lhunpo Monastery shuffled past the throne, bearing the gifts which had been seen earlier in the morning. Tea was served, after tasting by an official of the Tashi Lhunpo monastery, which was responsible for the day's food, first to the Dalai Lama and then to all present.

Then came the turn of the British Mission. Mr. Gould advanced to the centre of the space before the throne, saluted the Dalai Lama, and presented a silk scarf, and symbolic gifts identical with those which had been presented by the Chief Abbot of Tashi Lhunpo. At the same time the gifts from the British Government and Viceroy were brought forward. The Chikyab Khenpo placed round Mr. Gould's neck a long silk scarf which had been blessed by the Dalai Lama, and the Dalai Lama conferred a more personal blessing by the laying on of both hands. Mr. Gould then retired down the steps of the throne, moved across to the lower throne of the Regent to whom he presented a scarf, and bowed to the Prime Minister. The other members and personnel of the Mission followed.

The members of the Sikkim delegation took their turn.

As on the previous day, and on the first day of the New Year, the proceedings were suspended from time to time, for loud religious argument between two Doctors of Divinity, and for the troupe of dancing boys. It was noticed that at such less solemn moments the young monk brother of the Dalai Lama would, from his position near the steps of the throne, quietly steal up to be near the Dalai Lama and keep him company. Such times also gave opportunity for the exchange of friendly glances with the parents and children, and with friends seated round the hall. But Tibetan dignitaries are also critical, and it was learnt afterwards from several sources that Cabinet Ministers and Abbots had noted the exact way in which individual visitors had advanced to the throne, received blessing, or dealt with the tea, rice, seethed meat, and other refreshments offered them; but most of all how they had looked at the Dalai Lama and what note the Dalai Lama had taken of them. Finally tables loaded with sweetmeats, bread, and the carcasses of various animals, were laid out, there was the usual wild rush and belabouring with whips, and the floor was thrice swept so that no precious fragment should be lost. Again tea was served, long white scarves which the Dalai Lama had blessed, and coloured silk wisps of silk which he had knotted, were distributed to some of those present, the carpet bearing the lucky signs was unrolled, and the Dalai Lama was lifted down from the throne and withdrew, holding the hands of the two chief officers in attendance. Again a main impression produced was the extraordinary interest of the child in the proceedings, his presence, and his infallible skill in doing the right thing to the right person and at the right time. He was perhaps the only person amongst many hundreds who never fidgeted, and whose attention never wavered. It was very evident that the Ser-Thri-Nga-Sol was indeed the return, in response to prayer, of the Dalai Lama to a throne which by inherent authority was already his.

The same ceremony was performed eight times in all, the only important variation from day to day being in the matter of those whose special opportunity it was to take a main part in the offering of gifts and to provide the ceremonial food. On one day it was the Regent, on others the Chinese delegation, the Cabinet, the National Assembly, lay and monk officials, and representatives of the great monasteries of all parts of Tibet.

New Year ceremonies

Meanwhile the normal observances of the New Year had been in progress. On the first three days of the New Year, besides the more religious celebration of the New Year at the Potala on the first day, the more secular celebration on the second day, and a State visit to the Oracle of Nechung on the third day, the New Year is observed privately in every home in Lhasa in a manner and in a spirit which recall our Christmas. On other days old customs are kept up in the form of a race of riderless horses, a championship of arms, a parade of feudal cavalry, and arrow shooting, and there are many religious or semi-religious observances. Of these the most striking occur on the fifteenth of the first Tibetan month. On the fifteenth day there is a respite from the rigorous observance of the days of the Great Prayer, and the city is given over to unrestrained rejoicing. Round the half mile circuit of the Great Temple enormous pyramidal structures bearing effigies worked in butter of many colours are set up and, as the full moon rises, dense crowds surge round the holy building. An hour after

sunset the Regent was to be seen, accompanied by the parents and family of the Dalai Lama, preceded and followed by military bands, making a careful tour of inspection of the effigies. Lictors forced a way through the masses which thronged the troop-lined streets, lit by flaming cressets borne by servants on long poles. It was thought that the prize for the most popular decoration must be awarded to one, in the centre of which was a sort of mechanical Punch and Judy show which represented the State Oracle in a trance. In spite of the efforts of the lictors the Regent's progress occupied an hour and half. And so home, with memories of the joy and boisterous fun of the Mafeking night of many years ago, on ponies which had had more than enough of the cold and of bands, past the great mass of the Potala, flood-lit by the full moon, and set against an incredibly blue, night sky studded with flaming stars.

On the twenty-fifth of the first month the scene was the outer court of the Great Temple: the occasion, the aversion of any evil influences or intentions which might be directed against Tibet, and the resumption of control of the city by the civil power which had, during the twenty days of the Great Prayer, yielded authority to monk officials of the Drepung monastery. In this, the Iron Dragon, year, two of the civil officers most importantly concerned in ceremonial arrangements happened to be the old Rugbeians, Kusho Changopa, known at Rugby as Ringang, and Kusho Kyipup. The former, as Yaso, was, with his colleague, the son of Phunkang Shappe, discharging the honourable and costly duty, which comes only once in a lifetime, of organising and commanding some six hundred feudal cavalry. He also manages the Lhasa Hydro-Electric installation, and is the English translator to the Cabinet. The latter is one of the two City Magistrates of Lhasa.

The principal spectators were the Regent, the Cabinet, and the family of the Dalai Lama, seated in balconies overlooking the main gate of the Great Temple. After a parade and mock battle on the part of the feudal infantry the feudal cavalry, headed by the Yasos, rode past. The whips of authority were thrown down on the ground by the monks who had been exercising temporary control of the city, and were taken up by the servants of the City Magistrates. Monks with trumpets cymbals and drums filed out of the Temple and took up position round the outer court. Celebrants carrying censers, butterlamps and jars of holy water occupied the centre and engaged in prayer. Tall banners were set up in the street, and effigies of the evil spirits which were to be expelled from the city were brought out. Finally the Nechung Oracle rushed forth. He danced, staggering, and swaying, brandishing a dagger in either hand, and suddenly collapsed. With the help of attendants he rose and made another tottering dash forward. As he came near it could be seen that he was really possessed; his face deathly pale and set in the vacancy of a trance. He collapsed again and again leapt up for another blind tottering rush. The crowd surged round him, and he disappeared in the wake of a procession of figures in skull masks, black-hat dancers, and men carrying banners. At the city gate the effigies of evil spirits were set alight to the accompaniment of volleys of shots, and the Oracle, exhausted and unconscious, was carried back to the Temple.

About the Dalai Lama

The Tibetan Government have wisely decided that opportunity of private approach to the Dalai Lama should not ordinarily be granted. Such direct or indirect information

as is available in regard to him is therefore valuable. It has been mentioned that the Dalai Lama is fond of birds, and that the list of gifts to be presented by the British Mission included two pairs of budgerigars. It has also been suggested that the Dalai Lama has a strong will. It was thought that the budgerigars, having survived the winter journey from India, deserved rest and warmth, and it was hoped that, if they remained for a time in the careful charge of Mr. Fox, the Mission Wireless Operator (well-known to wireless amateurs in almost every country as AC4YN), who is an expert in budgerigars, they would breed. They were not therefore produced for actual presentation on the morning of February 23rd. Two days later there came a messenger from the Potala to request immediate delivery of the birds; then two more messengers, more senior than the last; and then two more. It was soon clear that, if there were to be a battle of wills, the Dalai Lama would prove that his will was the stronger; so it was decided that compliance was the only possible course, and Pemba Tsering, Rai Bahadur Norbhu's Head Clerk, was despatched to the Potala with the birds. It was well that he was sent, for other messengers also were on the way, and, on arrival at the Potala a high dignitary of the Church was in readiness. Pemba, considerably overcome, handed over the birds, and tried to make himself scarce, but he was sent for by the Dalai Lama, who talking Tibetan clearly and easily, discussed the birds' food and how to keep them safe. Pemba then noticed that the watch, nightingale clock, and musical box, which had been presented at the Norbhu Lingka and at the Potala, were all on the Dalai Lama's table, and he was told that the Dalai Lama, when off duty, would hardly let them out of his sight. And there was evidence of the Dalai Lama's real kindness to animals when a few days later, being persuaded that they might be better off for the time being in Mr. Fox's kindly care, he sent the budgerigars back to Dekyi Lingka, where they became great favourites with visitors.

Not long afterwards, grown-ups still being busy with ceremonies, the opportunity seemed favourable for a children's party – or rather two, because accommodation was limited, and there were well over a hundred children to be invited. The great stand-bys on such occasions are Mrs. Norbhu and Mrs. Changopa, wife of the old Rugbeian Yaso, and "Mary" Tsering, but, on the first party day Mary was busy house-warming her new house. Amongst the first to arrive was the family of the Dalai Lama. Kanwal Krishna had recently finished a half-length portrait of the Dalai Lama in oils, done mostly from memory. The eight year old monk brother noticed it immediately he entered the upstairs room in which visitors are received, ran along the cushioned seat which occupies one side of the room, and, if he is always as openly, affectionate to the Dalai-Lama as he was to the picture, he must be very fond of him indeed. There was nothing wanting in the spirit in which the parents and the three children entered into the fun of the party. At lunch, served on low tables in front of broad flat cushions, called bodens, all present tackled strange English foods with strange implements and good appetites and without hesitation. Then downstairs for a cinema Show, at which The King and Queen's tour in Canada and the United States, and some shots of Balmoral Castle and the Gardens, were favourites, followed, in close competition, by Charlie Chaplin, Mickey Mouse, Do you like Monkeys?, and Kodachrome scenes of Sikkim, Tibet and Bhutan. Then tea with more strange foods faithfully dealt with, crackers, and balloons – and finally a Christmas tree, presided over by two Father Christmases whose native language proved to be Tibetan, and who knew all the children. But all the time the Dalai Lama's brothers and sister-in-law, and especially

the monk brother, were wanting to save up crackers and balloons and toys for the Dalai Lama; and they went off happy with a parcel of things in the uses of which they soon instructed him when they returned to the Potala.

There is no doubt that the Dalai Lama has savoir faire. His knack of doing the right thing at the right time has been noted. A week after full moon there was a parade at the Potala of Collectors of Revenue (ranged in order according to the proportions of their realisations and the smallness of their outstandings during the previous year), and of those who had been responsible for the effigies of butter in the Cathedral square, ranged in six classes according to the merit of their exhibits as judged by the Regent. It is satisfactory to report that, next after the exhibit of the Tibetan Government who are frequent winners, the chief prize had been awarded to the Punch and Judy exhibit of the Gya-me Monastery – a sort of All Souls' where five hundred prize students from the Sera, Drepung and Gaden monasteries receive post-graduate education. The Collectors of Revenue were received by the Dalai Lama with due solemnity, and those who had provided fun with slaps on the back – which delighted them greatly.

It was anticipated that the child might soon weary of the confined space and restrictions of the Potala and wish to return to the Norbhu Lingka. Such a wish might well have been encouraged by his mother who, while resolute and successful in her endeavour to keep in touch with the Dalai Lama, cannot be permitted to sleep in the Potala and occupies a building outside the Northern gate. And there were those who feared for the health and happiness of a young boy in the dark and cold monastic halls of the Potala, and for his safety on its precipitous heights. But the Dalai Lama appears to love the Potala and especially what is generally considered to be an undesirable room, facing North, dark and cold – the favourite place of meditation of the Great Fifth Dalai Lama.

Note

* Regarding Trulku-s, see Sir Charles Bell's "The Religion of Tibet" – See also Madame Alexandra David-Neel's "With Mystics and Magicians in Tibet" Chap. 3 (Penguin books). See her page 117 regarding interval which may elapse between death and rebirth.

Comment *Alastair Lamb*

Source: A. Lamb, *Tibet, China & India 1914-1950: A History of Imperial Diplomacy*, Hertingfordbury: Roxford Books, 1989, pp. 285-6, 297-8 (notes).

The Gould Mission was indeed fortunate to have been able to witness some part at least of a complex and ancient ritual which will almost certainly never be repeated with anything like its original purity. The British party, like those from Nepal and Bhutan as well as China, were presented to the new Dalai Lama who, despite being only four years old, showed a remarkable ability in withstanding the rigours of public life. All this took place amidst the general excitement of the Tibetan New Year festivities.¹

There was a very clear political element in this second Gould Mission to Lhasa, to observe closely the activities of the Chinese party and, if possible, to counter them.

Wu Chung-hsin was the highest ranking Chinese official to reach Lhasa since the days of the Manchu Ambans, his status being that of junior Minister in the Kuomintang Government. His task, as had been that of the old Ambans, was undoubtedly to demonstrate that in the selection of the Dalai Lama the Chinese had a crucial role. Throughout the installation ceremonies Wu Chung-hsin endeavoured to make manifest that the Chinese position in Lhasa was not as that of other Powers. Quite how successful he was is open to question: the probability, however, is that he managed to convince the Tibetans to a greater extent than they were prepared to admit to Gould of China's place in the affairs of Tibet. The Wu Chung-hsin mission was met on its arrival at Lhasa with very great honour by three of the four Shaps in the Kashag and most of the senior Tibetan Government officials. At the installation ceremonies the Chinese somehow managed to acquire different, and more impressive, seating positions (usually explained by the Tibetans to Gould as the product of their rudeness or ignorance, of protocol) from everyone else. At the ceremony of 22 February 1940, of crucial diplomatic importance as the first of three days during which visiting delegations presented gifts and compliments to the new Dalai Lama, Wu Chung-hsin was present (along with the Nepalese and Bhutanese delegates) and Gould was not, a fact which was played down in the British accounts of this event, and for which not entirely convincing explanations were offered.²

Dr. Kung, Wu Chung-hsin's successor, was a senior official of the Mongolian and Tibetan Affairs Department of the Chinese Government who described his post as being the Lhasa Office of that Commission. The Kashag does not appear to have disputed this pretension. He was allowed to open a Chinese hospital in Lhasa with its resident Doctor, in competition with a British hospital then in the process of construction.³ Both Wu and Kung had easy access to the highest echelons of Tibetan officialdom. While Kung apparently was able to maintain that he was the head of what was now a permanent branch of the Mongolian and Tibetan Affairs Commission of the Chinese Government in Lhasa, by the end of Gould's visit the British representative had not secured official Tibetan recognition for the permanency of the British presence there which remained as informal as it had been in 1937.

The Tibetans, not surprisingly, did their best to minimise in their conversations with Gould the importance and success of the Chinese Mission. The role of China in the installation of the Dalai Lama, they said, simply did not exist. The Dalai Lama had not become the Incarnation that he was as the result of any ceremonies in Lhasa: as far as Tibet was concerned he had entered fully into possession of his heritage when he crossed into Tibet at Nagchuka in September 1939 (where a member of the Kashag had welcomed him as the rightful Dalai Lama) and been confirmed in this when he reached the Potala in October.⁴ Whatever the Tibetans might say to Gould, however, the impression conveyed to the world at large, duly reported in the *Calcutta Statesman* and *The Times* of London, for example, was that the Chinese were somehow essential to the recognition of a legitimate Dalai Lama. The *Calcutta Statesman*, Gould noted with irritation in his Mission report, declared "in detail, but quite inaccurately, that Mr. Wu had conducted the Dalai Lama to his throne, and read out a proclamation, and that the Dalai Lama had made obeisance towards Peking".⁵

Notes

[Editor's note: Lamb's notes have been renumbered and full references inserted.]

- 1 Gould described the details of the ceremonial in his autobiography, Gould, B. J. (Sir Basil) *The Jewel in the Lotus: Recollections of an Indian Political*, London, 1957; and in his *Report on the Discovery, Recognition and Installation of the Fourteenth Dalai Lama*, New Delhi, 1941 (also in Oriental and India Officer Records – hereafter OIOC – L/P&S/12/4179) [– as above].
- 2 It is not mentioned in Richardson, H. E., *Tibetan Précis*, Calcutta, 1945, reprinted in Aris, M. (ed.), *High Peaks, Pure Earth: Collected Writings on Tibetan History and Culture* [by Hugh Richardson], London, 1998, pp. 519–658; and a rather oblique explanation is offered in Gould, *Report*, and in Gould's autobiography, *Jewel, op. cit.*, p. 223. The explanation is not entirely convincing. Shortly after the event Gould was asked by the Government of India: "was there in your opinion ever any expectation that you would be invited to attend ceremony on February 22nd? Do you attribute exclusion to religious prejudices or to Regent's desire to placate Chinese by thus emphasising their special position vis-a-vis Tibet?" See: OIOC L/P&S/12/4194, Gould to India, 11 March 1940.

The failure to attend this ceremony, during which took place the presentation of gifts and the offering of expressions of national good will to the new Dalai Lama, on the first day when the Chinese were present, would certainly, whatever explanations might be offered, involve a loss of face.

The Chinese press at the time reported that the ceremony of 22 February 1940 was the actual installation ceremony, the coronation of the Dalai Lama as it were; and on this point both Li, writing from the Chinese point of view, and Shakabpa from the Tibetan, appear to be in agreement. It is hard to escape the conclusion that Wu was able to attend the key installation ceremony while Gould was not. See: OIOC L/P&S/12/4194, translation from Tientsin *Yung Pao* of 29 March 1940 describing the enthronement of the 14th Dalai Lama on 22 February 1940; Li, Tieh-tseung, *The Historical Status of Tibet*, New York 1956, p. 183; Shakabpa, Tsepon W. D., *Tibet. A Political History*, New Haven and London, 1967, p. 285.

This is Gould's published explanation of what happened. "The Tibetan Government proposed that the British Mission should attend with their gifts on the second day and enquired whether we wished to be present on the first day also. They were careful to point out that there was no question of our not being welcome on the first day. The question for consideration was whether attendance on the first day, when there would be no occasion for the presentation of gifts, would tend to detract from the effect of a more official, and also more intimate, appearance on the second day. In matters of ceremony it is usually safe to be guided by the implied wishes of the Tibetan Government, who are past masters in all that falls within the sphere of courtesy. It was therefore decided that we should attend on the second day only, in company with our good friends the representatives of Tashi Lhunpo (the seat of the Panchen Lama) and of Sikkim". See: Gould, *Jewel, op. cit.*, p. 223. This explanation does not really stand up to careful analysis. It plays down the significance of the fact that the British delegation, for whatever reason, did not attend, as did the Chinese, Nepalese and Bhutanese, the grand opening ceremonies which were clearly, even from Gould's own account, the most important, but had to make do with a lesser occasion in the company of the Panchen Lama's representatives (who were hardly the most popular figures in Lhasa) and the representatives of Sikkim (the least important of the Himalayan states).

- 3 The first Doctor was a German-trained Chinese who called himself Schaw. The Government of India hoped that his training had not resulted in turning him into a supporter of Hitler.
- 4 OIOC, L/P&S/12/4194, Gould to India, 5 March 1940; Gould to India, 23 March 1940.

It is interesting that the Tibetans in their conversations with Gould emphasised that this was the northern frontier point of Tibet. It was a long way south from the Inner-Outer Tibet border of the Simla Convention. The fact, of course, was that beyond Nagchuka lay the wastes of the Chang Tang which were unadministered and inhabited only by nomads.

- 5 OIOC, L/P&S/12/4194, Gould to India, 30 October 1940.

1948 TIBETAN TRADE MISSION TO UNITED KINGDOM

Tsering W. Shakya

Source: *The Tibet Journal* XV(4) (1990): pp. 97-114.

In 1948 Shakabpa Wangchuk Deden, who was, at the time the "Tsipon" (Finance Minister) of the Tibetan Government, led a trade delegation to India, China, America and Britain. This "trade mission" was to be a watershed in Tibetan history. It was the first time ever, after a half century of close contact with Britain that the Tibetan Government had decided to send an official mission to the West. This article examines the significance of the mission as a tribute to its leader Tsipon Shakabpa and his contribution to Tibetan history. Although it was officially described as a "Trade Mission" there is no doubt that it had important political repercussions. The timing of the Mission was of crucial significance since it came about at a period when the shifting balance of power in Asia increasingly threatened Tibet's status. To some extent one may regard the decision to send the Mission as a culmination of Tibetan forward policy, attempting to seek international recognition of Tibet's "independent status". After the fall of the Ching dynasty, and the expulsion of the Chinese Amban and military escorts from Lhasa, Tibet severed its ties with China, thereby achieving total control of its internal and external affairs. During this period there were also many attempts to gain some kind of international personality for Tibet and to consolidate its independent status. This was of particular concern at the time, since as far as Britain was concerned, its close contact with Tibet reached a convenient end with the establishment of independent India. Therefore the decision to send a Trade Mission at this point appeared to be a shrewd calculation on the part of the Tibetans. Shakabpa¹ gives three reasons for their decision.

1. The objective of the Trade Delegation was to seek the relaxation of Indian control on Tibetan exports and to request payment in dollars or pounds sterling instead of rupees; otherwise it would be necessary to seek direct trade relations with foreign countries. The Delegation was also to look for import prospects and to find suitable machines for use in agriculture and in wool factories.
2. The delegation was to purchase gold bullion for the backing of Tibetan currency.

3. As the world was not properly informed of Tibet's political status, and since what it did know was chiefly from Chinese sources, it was necessary for Tibet to open formal relations with other nations of the world.

Although there is no doubt that this was the fundamental basis for the decision to send the trade mission, there was another more immediate reason. In 1947 the Tibetan government's grain and gold reserves were low, and there was also a need to introduce the circulation of paper currency. Therefore the need to develop Tibet's own gold reserves to back the currency in circulation became urgent. Tsarong Dzasa, Tsipon Shakabpa and Trunyinchemo Cawtang, who jointly administered the Trapchi mint,² discussed the idea of purchasing gold from abroad. Their proposal was approved by the Kashag and the monasteries, who not only realised it was vital to the Tibetan economy but they also saw the need to protect their own wealth.³ Since the price of gold in India was much higher than abroad they thought that it would be cheaper to purchase the gold direct from England and America. Moreover, Tibet's export of wool, fur and yak tails was entirely controlled by middlemen in India, who exported the goods abroad. Tibetan businessmen were credited in rupees. It was clear that if Tibet were to develop its own reserve of foreign currency it was imperative that direct trade contact must be established abroad. Clearly, as far as the Tibetan authorities were concerned foreign trade was the main reason for dispatching the Trade Mission. However to Britain and America it was to prove a great diplomatic problem. I propose to examine in detail the Mission's visit to Britain for two reasons. Firstly, I have access only to the British records.* Secondly, although the Mission visited India, China and America, the visit to Britain was more significant, in that Tibet and Britain had maintained close contact for decades and since 1913, Tibetans had regarded Britain as a *de facto* ally. It was felt that of all countries, Britain would be the most likely to understand Tibet's predicament and most willing to assist Tibet. After India became independent Britain had expressed an interest in maintaining close contacts with Tibet.

On 29th of July 1947, the British government wrote to the Tibetan Government stating that, despite the withdrawal of Britain from India, the British Government wished to continue "the long standing relationship between the two countries",

"notwithstanding the constitution of the two Dominions of India and Pakistan on 15th August. His Majesty's Government in the United Kingdom will continue to take a friendly interest in the future prosperity of the Tibetan people and in the maintenance of Tibetan autonomy. They accordingly hope that the Tibetan Government will agree to a continuance of the present friendly contacts for which they would wish to provide an arrangement for visits to Lhasa to be paid from time to time by the United Kingdom's High Commissioner in New Delhi or a member of his staff. His Majesty's Government trusts that after August 15th the close and cordial relations which have existed for so many years with themselves and the Government of India will continue with successor Indian Governments upon whom alone rights and obligations arising from existing treaty provision will thereafter be devolved".⁴

Tibetans, therefore, felt that Britain would welcome the Trade Mission. But it appears that the Tibetans did not approach the British High Commission in Delhi or the Deputy High Commissioner in Calcutta. The British first heard of the Mission's intention to visit the United Kingdom when they were informed by Mr Drumright of the United States Embassy in London. He told Mr Peter Murray of the Foreign Office that the leader of the Trade Mission had approached the United States Ambassador in Delhi saying that they intended to send a Trade Mission to the United States and the United Kingdom.⁵

The British were quick to see the immediate diplomatic consequences of receiving any such formal Mission from Tibet. Despite many years of intimate contact between Tibet and Britain, Tibet's international status was far from clear. The Trade Mission was the first attempt by Tibet to establish diplomatic relations with foreign powers. Any action taken by the UK or any other government would be interpreted by China as a change in policy and China would do its best to obstruct the success of the Mission. The boldness of the Tibetans seems to have taken the British by surprise. They clearly saw it as politically motivated, as the following note from Mr Peter Murray in the Foreign Office shows:

“... any idea of the Tibetans establishing direct trade relations with either the USA or the UK is quite fantastic. The Mission is obviously intended to serve a purely political purpose, and if it ever comes off, will cause some extremely delicate situations vis a vis China, who has never abated her claim to suzerainty over Tibet”.⁶

There followed a considerable debate in the Foreign Office not only about the imminent arrival of the Mission but also about the whole nature of Britain's policy towards Tibet. In the past, its *raison-d'être* had been security of British India. Now that India was independent, Tibet was no longer of major concern to Britain. However, British were clearly aware that the status of Tibet was an area of concern for India. Therefore any step taken by the British must be in align with the interests of India.

The Trade Mission's intention to visit Britain placed the British government in a difficult position. What should be the British policy towards Tibet? Should Britain gracefully distance itself from Tibet? There were officials who felt that the Mission should be discouraged from visiting the UK. Mr A. C. Scott from the Foreign Office commented that,

“We cannot receive in the country the members of the Tibetan Trade Mission except in a purely personal and unofficial capacity; to do otherwise would be to accord official recognition to what is after all, not de jure an independent country”.⁷

The officials at the Foreign Office and at the Commonwealth Relations Office knew that any reluctance from Britain would be taken by Tibet as a change in British policy. It would appear strange since Britain had already expressed interest in sending a Mission to Lhasa in 1949 or 1950.⁸

Moreover, as Mr Peter Murray pointed out, it was difficult to tell the Tibetans not to send a Mission to the UK:

“As we have maintained a Mission in Lhasa from 1935 to 1947, we may perhaps have some difficulty in convincing the Tibetans that we cannot allow them to send a mission to London”.⁹

The British High Commissioner in Delhi Sir Terence Shone, did not take the Mission very seriously at first. He telegraphed to the Foreign Office, saying

“The Mission contains no officials of standing and it is therefore perhaps unlikely that will raise any political issues”.¹⁰

The telegram goes on to state that the Chinese Embassy had asked the High Commissioner that “no visa should be issued to the members of the Mission”.¹¹ On 29th December 1947, Tsipon Shakabpa and members of the Trade Mission visited the British High Commissioner in Delhi, but did not discuss matters of any importance. Tsipon Shakabpa then requested a further meeting with Sir Terence Shone and this was duly arranged for 31st of December 1947. Meanwhile, the Foreign Office in London had already reached the decision to grant visas to the members of the Mission, but they were only “prepared to give visas to the members of the Mission as individuals”.¹² Further, in response Sir Terence Shone’s telegram of 28th December, Mr Donaldson from the Commonwealth Relations Office informed the High Commission in Delhi,

“We cannot admit the right of Chinese Embassy to intervene in this matter since His Majesty’s Government’s relations with Tibet are still governed by the Simla Convention of 1914”.¹³

On 31st of December 1947, Tsipon Shakabpa and the members of the Mission met with Sir Terence Shone. Shakabpa handed him a letter from the Kashag;

“the Tibetan Government has sent this trade mission led by the Finance Secretary Tsipon Shagapa and his assistant Khenchung Changkyima to see trade conditions of Tibet’s import of foreign goods from India, America, China and England, and Tibet’s export of wool, yak’s tail, and fur skins, for the benefit of the country and its people. We therefore ask you to extend your kind assistance in obtaining American dollar exchange, for the sake of the good relations between India and Tibet.

With greeting scarf, dated 26th of the 8th Month of Tibetan Fire-Pig year.¹⁴

During the course of the meeting it appears that the British never told the Tibetans that they were only prepared to grant them visas as distinguished individuals visiting the UK. The Mission left India for Nanking, but there was no way that the Chinese were prepared to recognise Tibetan passports, the Mission travelled to Nanking on Chinese passports, reaching Nanking on 1st of February 1948. In June 1948, the Mission left Nanking for Hong Kong. Here, they put aside their Chinese passports and sought visas from the US Consulate on their specially prepared Tibetan passports. The Consulate issued them visas on form 257; it also stamped visas on the

actual passports. Protests from the Chinese at this turn of events did not prevail. While in China, the Chinese tried their utmost to persuade the Mission not to go to the United States and Britain. It was unnecessary for them to go abroad, the Chinese said, since China was prepared to meet their requirements for foreign currency and gold. If the Mission had to go abroad, they should travel with Chinese passports.¹⁵ The Chinese press in Nanking tried to portray the Mission as seeking a “passport to go abroad” from the Central government. Their stay in Nanking was described as:

“negotiation with the authorities on the problem of improving trade relations between Tibet and other provinces”.¹⁶

The Mission faced considerable pressure from the Chinese in Nanking. On 14th May, Tsipon Shakabpa visited the British Ambassador there and asked if the Mission could pick up their visas in Hong Kong. Tsipon Shakabpa also informed the Ambassador that because of Chinese pressure and insistence that the Mission should only travel on Chinese passports, they had informed the Chinese authorities that they would return to Tibet via India. However, once they were out of reach of Chinese interference, they intended to proceed to the USA and the UK.¹⁷

The Members of the Mission had travelled to Nanking with Chinese travel documents and now they were informing the Chinese authorities that they were returning to India. The duplicity on the part of the Tibetans caused Britain to suspect that they were playing what Sir Ralph Stevenson called, an

“artless and childish fashion, a double game”.¹⁸

The Mission left for the United States from where they intended to proceed to Britain.

While they were in America, visas for the United Kingdom expired and they had to apply for a second visa at the British Consulate in New York. Meanwhile, when the Chinese learned that Britain had issued visas on Tibetan passports, Dr Tuan Mao Lau, from the Chinese Embassy in London, visited the Foreign Office and made a formal protest. He was told that the Embassy in Nanking had made a “technical error”.¹⁹ But at the same time it was pointed out to him that

“in a case like this of disputed authority it is never the practice to stop a worthy individual from travelling by insisting on the production of a national passport”.²⁰

On 12th October, the Foreign Office instructed the Consulate General in New York in following terms:

You should know that we have no official request from the Tibetans to receive a trade mission and we are proposing to treat the “Mission” simply as distinguished visitors; this was made clear to them when they were in India. Furthermore, the Chinese have made official representation to us about the action of the Embassy at Nanking in granting them visas for the UK, and while we do not unconditionally admit the Chinese claim to suzerainty over

Tibet we are anxious to avoid unnecessary trouble of this kind with the Chinese Embassy while the Tibetans are in this country.

We hope therefore that while giving them any assistance in the way of information or advice which they may require, you will bear in mind that they are coming here as distinguished private visitors, not as an official mission.²¹

When the members of the Mission applied for the renewal of their visas, they found that the British had changed their minds and were not willing to recognise Tibetan passports. They were informed by the Passport Controller at New York that visas would be affixed on an affidavit of identity. On 9th of October 1948, Tsipon Shakabpa wrote to the British Embassy:

“I have the honour to state as follows. Planning to sail for London (England) on October 22nd, 1948, we approached the British Visa Officer in New York for visaeing our passports for that purpose. But surprisingly enough, we were told by the officer concerned that our passports will not be stamped with the regular visa stamps of the British Visa Office owing to a special instruction received by him from authorities concerned in London. Instead, we were advised to sign “Affidavits in lieu of Passport” which he told us will be visaed. In as much as the Government of Tibet has issued us passports, specifying us as members of an official Tibetan Trade Mission, which have regularly been visaed by the authorities of Government of India and by the British Embassy in Nanking and by the American Consulate General in Hong Kong and stamped by U.S. Immigration and Naturalisation authorities, we request Your Excellency to stamp our passport with the regular visa stamps – as we are not in a position to travel under “Affidavits in lieu of Passport” when we have with us regular Tibetan Government Passports.

In this connection, if Your Excellency has to refer the matter to London and await instructions, kindly do inform the authorities there our position by telegram with a request to send their final instructions by telegram too, and inform us the final position as soon as possible”.²²

On 15th Oct 1948 Mr Graves from the British Embassy replied to Tsipon Shakabpa’s letter:

Dear Mr Shakabpa,

I have been instructed by the Ambassador to reply to your letter of the 9th Oct, which has been given very careful consideration.

In visa matters procedures are laid down in the standing instructions and in a case such as this the normal method is for the visa to be affixed on an affidavit of identity. This does not affect in any degree the facilities for travel, and in fact a visa given in this way is just the same as a visa affixed to any other travel document. I trust that you will send your representative to the British Passport Officer in New York again, so that your mission can be furnished with papers necessary under regulations. I am sure that the passport officer will assist you in every way that is proper.

May I take this opportunity of wishing you an enjoyable and profitable stay in England.²³

Neither the Embassy in Washington nor the Consulate in New York felt it was necessary to refer the matter to London. As far as they were concerned, they had already received clear instructions. The Foreign Office maintained that it had not received any official "intimation from the Tibetan Government" of its intention to send a Trade Mission to London. Moreover, Britain had not altered its policy regarding Tibet's "international status". Britain had always acknowledged Chinese "sovereignty" over Tibet, and the right to conduct its foreign affairs, therefore issuing visas on Tibetan passports would clearly signal a shift in traditional British policy. It would be seen as a clear indication that Britain is willing to confer recognition to independent status of Tibet.

However there is no doubt that this was not the primary reason for the withdrawal of the visas. The main reason for the change in the Foreign Office's attitude was that it had come under considerable pressure from the Chinese. The Foreign Office had already given an assurance to the Chinese that there was no change in the British government's policy towards Tibet and told them that Nanking had issued the visas in error. In an attempt to appease the Chinese, Dr Tuan Mao Lau was told that since the Tibetans clearly did not have Chinese Passports,

"the correct procedure would have been to require the application to obtain affidavits of identity on which a British visa would be put".²⁴

The cavalier attitude adopted by a certain section of the Foreign Office caused some concern. The traditional divergence interests emerged between the Foreign Office and the Commonwealth Relations Office.

The Foreign Office's spurious argument that they had not received an "official request from the Tibetan Government to receive a trade mission" was clearly incorrect, since when Shakabpa met the High Commissioner in Delhi he handed a letter addressed to him from the Tibetan government. This made it clear that the Mission was sent by the Tibetan Government as an official Trade Mission. The issue was taken up by Sir Paul Patrick from the Commonwealth Relations Office, who wrote to Mr N. E. Denning at the Foreign Office, on 16th November and expressed his concern over the way in which the Foreign Office had handled the visa problem.

We are not altogether clear why in FO letter of 12th Oct, the consulate General NY were told that we had received no official request from the Tibetan Government to receive a Trade Mission. You will remember that letter from the Kashag which was enclosed with Selby's letter to Donaldson 31 of 9th January, of which a copy was sent to the FO under our No ext 5160/48/ of 21st January. In our experience this letter did not differ in form or in substance from normal official letters from the Tibetan Government, and we should certainly imagine that that is how the Tibetans themselves regard it. It therefore would seem rather difficult for us to maintain the position that we have received no official intimation from the Tibetan Government about The Mission.

Our view here is, therefore, that the Trade Mission is entitled to be given the facilities normally given in the case of official Trade Missions. We also think that the letters which they are carrying, addressed to the King, the Prime Minister and the Secretary of State, might properly be given such answers as they would receive if presented by a Trade Mission from any other Government recognised by us as a separate entity.

I think you will be fully aware that the Chinese claim to control Tibet's external relations is no new thing. Both we and the Government of India, have, for over 30 years, insisted on maintaining direct diplomatic relations with the Tibetan Government, and so far as we can recall, have on no occasion admitted the frequently expressed claim of the Chinese Government that they are responsible for the conduct of Tibet's external relations. The 1914 Convention which governs the relations between India, ourselves, and probably Pakistan, on the one hand, and Tibet on the other was negotiated in the name of the King, on behalf of the UK as well as India. As we regard Tibet as capable of entering into Treaties, it is difficult to see why we should at the present juncture be chary of receiving a Tibetan Trade Mission in this country or of recognising Tibetan passports.

Our particular concern here is that if we do anything which implies that we regard Tibet as part of China, or that the Chinese are responsible for the conduct of Tibet's foreign relations, the Government of India are sure to suspect that we have modified our policy in this regard without any consultation with them?²⁵

The Foreign Office never replied to Sir Paul Patrick's letter. The officials at the Foreign Office evaded the issues raised by the letter. They waited until the Trade Mission had left London and considered the matters raised by Sir Paul Patrick as merely academic.

Tsipon Shakabpa was determined that the members of the Mission should only travel on Tibetan Passports and was not prepared to compromise. He had had to fight with the Chinese in Nanking over the issue of passports and it was only by his cunning and deception that they were able to circumvent Chinese pressure. He knew that getting the British and the Americans to affix their visas on the Tibetan passport would be tantamount to a recognition of Tibet's independent status.²⁶ As Shakabpa pointed out, one of the main reason for the Trade Mission was to show the world that Tibet was an independent country. When reporters in America asked about Chinese objections, he told them that "Tibet was independent and that its ties with Chinese were of a religious nature only".²⁷

If the Mission was to agree to British demands, all their earlier efforts to secure visas on Tibetan passports would have been in vain. The British seem to have somehow felt that because of the Tibetans' lack of experience in international affairs, they would fail to see the distinction between a "national passport" and an "affidavit". According to the Passport Control Manual, Paragraph 132, affidavits should contain sentences stating, "I have lost my nationality of origin" or "I am unable to obtain a national passport". Tsipon Shakabpa was prepared neither to agree to such a statement, nor to accept the British argument that there was no real difference. The Foreign

Office had tried to assure them that they would be treated no less favourably if they were to travel on affidavits. He felt he had no option but to inform the British Consulate in New York that they had decided to cancel their trip to England.²⁸

The British Ambassador, Sir Oliver Franks, then suggested to the Foreign Office that the party should be admitted without visas.²⁹ Shakabpa also wrote to Ernest Bevin, British Foreign Minister, confirming that the Mission had to cancel its planned visit to the United Kingdom:

To His Excellency the Minister of Foreign Affairs, His Majesty's Government of the United Kingdom, London, England (Europe)

Your Excellency,

I have this privilege of addressing Your Excellency regarding our trip to England. We have been deputed officially by the Cabinet (Kashag) of Tibet to visit India, China, the United States, the United Kingdom and other countries and to find out the possibilities of improving trade between Tibet and the above countries.

We have already visited India, China and the United States. And we would have very much liked to visit England also, especially as relations between England and Tibet have been very cordial for a long time. Besides, we have some letters to be presented personally to His Majesty the King of England, the Prime Minister, the Minister of Foreign Affairs and the Commerce Department addressed by Their Holiness the Dalai Lama and the Regent of Tibet and the Kashag (Cabinet) of Tibet.

But we were surprised by the requirement of your Visa Officer in New York. He informed us that he could issue visa for us to go to England only in Forms of Affidavits to be signed by us, as he has been specially instructed by authorities in London to do so. He declined to issue visa on our passports especially issued to us by the Government of Tibet.

We wrote to him to enquire to authorities in London again explaining our position and to issue visas on our Passport, as we are unable to travel by Form of Affidavits while we, as official members of official trade mission from Tibet, have our passports issued by the Government of Tibet.

In this connection, we wrote also to the British Consulate General in New York and to His Excellency the British Ambassador at Washington, D.C. but without success. We enclose copies of our correspondence for Your Excellency's information.

We beg to inform Your Excellency that if the British Visa Officer refuses to issue visas on our passports. we must regretfully decline to go to England at all. And we are returning to India via France. We are sailing to France by Queen Elizabeth on November 6, 1948.

I have the honour to be,

Your Excellency's most faithful
Tsipon Shakabpa, Leader of Tibet Trade Mission.³⁰

Mr R. C. Blackham from the Foreign Office clearly recognised the difficulties this presented and on 21st October he wrote a memorandum in which he pointed out,

“This is an important development, and puts us in something of a difficulty. We have already admitted to the Chinese that Nanking made a technical error in granting visas for the UK on the ‘Mission’ Tibetan passport. Washington clearly acted rightly in taking account of the instruction contained in (paragraph 3 of FO’s telegram 573) when dealing with an application for renewal, but the Tibetans are just as clearly offended by the obvious implication that we do not recognise their ‘Tibetan passport’”.³¹

Blackham went on to point out that the significance of the Trade Mission was not merely commercial, but political from both the Tibetan and British points of view. He wrote,

“We are moreover, intentionally minimising any political importance the Tibetans may attach to the visit by insisting that the ‘Mission’ are simply distinguished private visitors from our point of view. I submit however that it would be politically most unfortunate if the ‘Mission’ go back to Tibet in a disgruntled frame of mind, believing that we have raised unnecessary difficulties about admitting them into the United Kingdom. Such a development might possibly jeopardize our chance of getting the Tibetans to receive a British Mission at Lhasa in 1949, if it is decided to send one. In the circumstances, I think it would be unfortunate if these people did not come to the United Kingdom”.³²

As Blackham pointed out, if the Mission were to cancel the visit, this would not only cause a severe rift in the Anglo-Tibetan relationship, but India would also perceive it as a shift in traditional British policy towards Tibet, thus undermining the Indian interest in keeping the *status quo*.³³ It was clear that if they did not come to London, it would be a great diplomatic blunder for the Mission and an embarrassment for Britain.

The Foreign Office’s ingenuity was not exhausted, however. Blackham consulted Mr Jeffes of the Passport Control Department on the problem, and Jeffes devised an ingenious way of overcoming the problem. Mr Jeffes’s solution was simply to do nothing. He told Blackham that the existing visa should be extended without informing the Chinese since they had already admitted to the Chinese that the visa had been issued in error in the first place. On 26th of October 1948, Mr Jeffes instructed the Embassy in Washington to “extend the validity of the visas granted in Nanking to six months or more if necessary.” Jeffes goes on to state, “to do so as inconspicuously as possible, adding only initials to justify the alteration but on no account to add anything to show that this had been done in New York”.³⁴

On 27th of October, Dr Cheng Tien Hsi, the Chinese Ambassador, visited the Foreign Office and stated that all “formal contacts between the Mission and Ministers or others whom they wish to meet should be arranged through the Chinese Embassy.”³⁵ He went on to say that a similar arrangement had been agreed by the State Department and that a meeting was arranged for the Mission to meet the President

accompanied by the Chinese Ambassador. The Foreign Office, however, was not prepared to agree to the demands made by the Chinese, before finding out what arrangements had been made in America. Even if such arrangements had been made by the Chinese in America, the situation was different for Britain. The Tibetans did not have a tradition of contact with America, whereas Britain and Tibet had a long history of bilateral diplomatic history. Nevertheless the Foreign Office wanted to ascertain what the practice in America had been, and requested the Embassy in Washington for information and to "confirm that what Dr Cheng has said is substantially correct".³⁶ The Foreign Office found that the Tibetans were most anxious to avoid any official contacts with the Chinese Embassy, which might be interpreted as Chinese having some kind of authority over the Mission. Throughout their stay in America the Chinese attempted to interfere with the arrangements.

As far as the Tibetans were concerned, the whole point of the Mission was to show the world that Tibet was an independent country. Therefore it was detrimental to the success of the Mission if the Chinese were seen to exert any influence over the course of the Mission. Sir Oliver Frank, the British Ambassador in Washington informed the Foreign Office that he had been told by the State Department that, "when the Mission expressed a wish to call on the President, the State Department urged the Chinese to raise no objection and, in order to save Chinese face, proposed that the Chinese Ambassador should accompany the Mission. [. . .] However the Tibetan Mission then stated that they preferred not to pay a visit at all rather than be accompanied by the Chinese Ambassador".³⁷ Thus the meeting with the President did not take place.

In London, the Chinese Embassy continued to press the Foreign Office that meetings with the King, Prime Minister and the other Ministers must be accompanied by the Chinese Ambassador. On 1st of December 1948, the Chinese Ambassador met with Sir Orme Sargent at the Foreign Office, who stated that Britain had been in direct relations with the Government of Tibet for many years and this did not diverge from previous British policy towards Tibet. The question of a Chinese representative accompanying the Mission's meetings with the Prime Minister or other Ministers should be discussed with the Tibetans.³⁸

The Trade Mission arrived in Britain on 20th of November and was met at Victoria station by Foreign Office officials. Shakabpa had already expressed the desire to meet with Their Majesties the King and the Queen, the Prime Minister and the Foreign Minister. The Mission also brought with them letters from the Kashag and the Regent for the British Prime Minister. All these meetings were arranged as requested. On 3rd of December the Members of the Mission met with Prime Minister Clement Attlee, who was given two letters, one from the Kashag and the other from the Regent. The Foreign Office feared that the letters may raise awkward political questions. In the end their suspicion was unfounded: it was a simple courtesy letter:

To Honourable Mr Attlee, Prime Minister of England.

Tsepon Shakapa, the Financial Secretary of the Tibetan Government and his assistant Khanchung Chankhimpa are being sent to observe and enquire about the trade conditions of wool, yak's tail, variety of fur and other trade goods for import from India, America, China and England for the benefit of Tibet. In view of the most cordial relationship existing between Great Britain

and Tibet, I hope that you will kindly render your possible help to them in exchanging for American (dollars) and for the other trade matters.

With a greeting scarf and a portrait of myself bearing my seal. From Takda Pandita The tutor of Dalai Lama and Regent of Tibet 25th of the 8th month of Fire Pig Year.³⁹

A formal meeting was arranged with the Board of Trade to discuss the establishment of direct trade with United Kingdom in order to enable Tibet to earn its own foreign exchange and to purchase two million dollars worth of gold.

It was evident from the start that the Mission's ability to transact real trade negotiations was limited. Britain simply advised that these matters should be first discussed with the Government of India, as India was in the best position to help Tibet. The Treasury informed the Mission that they were in no position to sell any gold, as the British economy was also facing a shortage of gold reserves.⁴⁰ In the end, despite the title "Trade Mission", the only commercial transaction the Mission carried out was the purchase of two cars, an Austin 90 and a Sunbeam 90. The members of the Mission sold a large quantity of musk that they had brought with them. In the end the actual nature of the Mission was less significant than the diplomatic and political problems it generated, as evident from the fact that the actual commercial transactions were limited.

The Trade Mission to the United Kingdom and America was an attempt by Tibet to achieve international viability and to demonstrate its independence from China. Throughout the trip, Tsipon Shakabpa showed his determination not to yield to Chinese pressure. When Britain refused to affix visas on Tibetan passports, he called the British bluff by cancelling the Mission's visit to Britain and when the Americans imposed the condition that the Chinese Ambassador must accompany the Mission when they met with the President, Shakabpa had the confidence to cancel the meeting, thus demonstrating Tibet's independence. When Col. G. A. Keene, who was given the task of looking after the Mission in London, asked Shakabpa if he felt the trip had been a success, he replied, "the Mission has advertised to people who did not know previously the fact that Tibet is an independent country".⁴¹

Notes

1 See: Tsipon W. D. Shakabpa, *Tibet: A Political History*, Yale University Press 1967, pp. 294–295.

2 See: interview with Shakabpa; Melvyn C. Goldstein, with the help of Gelek Rimpoche, *A History of Modern Tibet, 1913–1951, The Demise of the Lamaist State*. University of California Press, 1989, pp. 570–571.

3 *Ibid.*

* For the purpose of this article, I have only used sources from the Public Records Office, (Kew). There are detailed records of the Mission at the India Office Library and Records.

Also see: Melvyn C. Goldstein, with the help of Gelek Rimpoche, *A History of Modern Tibet, 1913–1951, The Demise of the Lamaist State*. University of California Press, 1989, for details of the Mission to other countries. pp. 569–610. Shakabpa has also written a brief account of the Mission in, *Bod kyi srid don rgyal rabs*, Vol. 2, pp. 397–404.

4 FO 371 84460.

5 FO 371 63943.

6 *Ibid.*, Internal note 29th August 1947.

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- 7 FO 371 70042, Internal note 6th January 1948.
- 8 The British did make a serious plan to send a Mission to Lhasa. However, it was abandoned, because India and Britain felt that such a mission would be seen by the Chinese as a provocation.
- 9 FO 371 70042.
- 10 FO 371 70042, Telegram from United Kingdom High Commission (UKHC) in Delhi to Commonwealth Relations Office, (CRO) London, 28th December 1947.
- 11 *Ibid.*
- 12 *Ibid.*, Telegram from P. Murray to UKHC Delhi.
- 13 *Ibid.*, Telegram from Mr Donaldson, CRO to Shone, UKHC Delhi 14th January 1948.
- 14 The letter was addressed to the United Kingdom High Commissioner, the text was forwarded from UKHC in Delhi to CRO on 31st December 1947.
- 15 Shakabpa told the British Ambassador, Sir Ralph Stevenson that the Chinese offered to meet all the expenses for the Mission if they travelled on Chinese Passports.
- 16 FO 371 70042, Telegram from Sir Ralph Stevenson to the Foreign Office (FO).
- 17 *Ibid.*, Telegram from Sir R. S. Stevenson to the FO, he wrote, "the mission was anxious that no hint of their intention should be divulged to the Chinese".
- 18 *Ibid.*, Letter from Sir Ralph Stevenson to the FO 19th May 1948.
- 19 FO 371 70043.
- 20 *Ibid.*
- 21 *Ibid.*, Telegram from FO to the Consulate General, New York, 12th October 1948.
- 22 FO 370 70044.
- 23 *Ibid.*, File 52.
- 24 FO 370 70043.
- 25 FO 370 70043, File 64.
- 26 Shakabpa reproduced a copy of his passport as an appendix to, *Tibet: A Political History*, Yale 1967.
- 27 FO 371 70043, Telegram from British Embassy, Washington to FO, 11th August 1948.
- 28 FO 371 70044, Telegram from British Embassy, Washington to FO, 20th October 1948.
- 29 *Ibid.*
- 30 FO 371 70044, Shakabpa to Ernest Bevin, 28th October 1948.
- 31 *Ibid.*, Telegram from Blackham to Washington, 21st Oct 1948.
- 32 *Ibid.*
- 33 After the Mission had left London, on 6th December 1948, the Government of India informed the UKHC in Delhi that they are concerned with the treatment of the Mission by the FO and requested confirmation that the British policy towards Tibet has not changed. FO 371 70046, Telegram from UKCH Delhi to CRO.
- 34 FO 371 70044, Telegram Mr Jeffes to Washington, 26th October 1948.
- 35 *Ibid.*
- 36 FO 371 70044, Telegram FO to Washington, 2nd November 1948.
- 37 *Ibid.*, Telegram from Sir Oliver Frank to FO, 5th November 1948.
- 38 FO 371 70045, Minutes of meeting between Sir Orme Sargent and the Chinese Ambassador, 1st of December 1948.
- 39 FO 371 70046.
- 40 *Ibid.*, Minute of meeting at the Board of Trade, 6th December 1948.
- 41 FO 371 70045, Report by Col. G. A. E. Keene to FO.

**‘NOTES ON A CONVERSATION
WITH MR J. E. REID OF THE
GENERAL ELECTRIC COMPANY’**

Source: previously unpublished document from the Public Record Office, London, Reference 170 649, FO 371/84449. Reprinted by kind permission of HM Stationery Office.

1. Mr. J. E. Reid has just returned to Calcutta after a seven weeks stay in Lhasa. The Tibetans had enquired of Messrs. Gilbert, Gilkes and Gordon of Kendal (who have done work for the Tibetan Government previously) for suitable firms to install electric wiring in Lhasa and Messrs. Gilbert and Gordon had apparently recommended the G.E.C. Mr. Reid is the Calcutta Manager of the G.E.C. and has been in India for over twenty years. The arrangements for his journey to Lhasa were all made by the Tibetan Government. In Lhasa, Mr. Reid was himself received and ‘blessed’ by the Dalai Lama.
2. During the past three months or so, the Tibetan Government had suddenly awoken to the reality of the dangers which threatened it and is now regretting its past policy of keeping aloof from outside contacts. Tibetans now wished that they had raised more emphatically the question of their international status, when the British left India in August, 1947.
3. There was no question that the Tibetans would not fight in the event of China’s invasion. They are anxious for material help e.g., arms, from outside but are equally anxious to secure the moral and international support of the U.K. and the U.S.A. Missions are shortly to leave Tibet for the U.K. and the U.S.A. A Mission was recently to have left for Peking but the appointee fell sick, and it was then realised that it would be impolitic to send a Mission to Peking since that would invite the immediate return of a Communist Mission to Lhasa.
4. The Tibetans have prepared plans to evacuate the Dalai Lama, the Ministers and the State Treasure (to Sikkim or to India) and to set up a Government in exile if necessary.
5. (This information was given confidentially) The Tibetan Government had given Mr. Reid Rs.1 lakh of Government money to bring to India for the purchase of small arms. Mr. Reid had had difficulty in getting this money into India. The Government is believed to have large quantities of gold bullion and coins in the State Treasury in Lhasa, i.e. there is no question that the country cannot pay for the immediate supplies it requires.
6. Mr. Reid’s Company (The G.E.C.) is to supply the equipment for a small Hydro-Electric Station at Lhasa, comprising four turbines, producing 125 kilowatts each – a total of 500 kilowatts in all. The turbines would be operated by a 25-ft fall in

the river. His firm will also supply the line equipment. About 45 tons of equipment (of which the heaviest individual load will be 22-cwt) are to be taken to Lhasa – and Bharat Airways (Birla Line) are proposing to attempt to fly the equipment in. The equipment, however, will apparently not be ready for despatch from Calcutta until about September 1950. There are no airfields as such in Lhasa but there are several places which are quite close which are natural airfields and which only require slight surface clearing to make them operable. Bharat Airways will meantime attempt an air route survey. It is believed that Bharat Airways are also interested in flying into Tibet the small arms and other equipment required which the Tibetans want. The Tibetan Government are now anxious to develop air communications with India and Mr. Reid had brought back with him a Permission carrying the seal of the Regent authorising the Indian Airline Company to undertake flying operations into Tibet.

7. The G.E.C. is merely supplying the equipment and material (Rs.6 lakhs worth) for the Electrical Scheme. Two young Tibetans will shortly be sent down to Calcutta for training in the assembly and handling of the equipment. The G.E.C. asked for six trainees but for some obscure reason the Government will permit only two men to come. One of the trainees may be George Tsarong (?)¹ a son of one of the Ministers. The Tibetan Government need an Engineer to supervise the erection and subsequent operation of the plant. They wanted a G.E.C. man but G.E.C. could not undertake to appoint a man who would definitely remain in Tibet to complete the scheme and the G.E.C., therefore, recommended that the Tibet Government should agree to employ Mr. Ned Bailiev (?)² – a White Russian who has been employed for many years in the Electric Supply Department of Sikkim State and who has for many years been anxious to obtain employment in Tibet. Hitherto, the Tibetans would not give Mr. Ned Bailiev permission to enter Tibet though Bailiev’s case was apparently sponsored by Mr. Hopkinson, late Government of India political officer in Sikkim.
8. There are two other Britishers in Tibet:–
 - (a) Mr. N. R. Fox (ex I.C.S.?),³ married to a Tibetan lady and has four children. He runs the Tibetan Government Wireless Post at Lhasa. Fox has been in Tibet for about 15 years. As a precaution he recently sent his wife to Kalimpong. Her children are all in Kalimpong Schools. Mr. Reid brought out from Tibet, four mule loads of Mr. Fox’s possessions plus some money for him.
 - (b) Mr. Ford, who runs the Tibetan Government Wireless Post near Choundo [sic] in Eastern Tibet. It was apparently from this Wireless post that Mr. Lowell Thomas broadcast several times to America.⁴

Mr. Reid gathered that until the Government of India withdrew the licences of all British amateur transmitters in India, Mr. Fox used to communicate with some of them regularly. Fox has now apparently no unofficial wireless contact with India.

9. Mr. Reid, on his way out from Tibet, met with Mr. Surkhang Depong⁵ at Gangtok returning to Lhasa from Delhi. Mr. Depong [sic] said he had tried to convince the Indians and ‘The British in Delhi’ that Tibet was imminently threatened but that they had taken the line that it was not likely that any invasion threat would develop for two or three years or possibly longer. (N.B. this is Mr. Reid’s version of what Depong said.) Depong said he had stressed in Delhi the fact that the Communists not only intended to attack Tibet but planned to use Tibet as a

springboard for a further offensive against India but that the Indians seemed to be reluctant to take this view of the situation.

10. The Tibetans had invited Mr. Reid to pay a second visit to their country. Mr. Reid (who had lost two stones in weight during his trip) may decide to revisit the country in about a years time. [sic] Mr. and Mrs. Reid have spent over 20 years in India with the G.E.C. and they are thinking of settling down in Shillong eventually.
11. The Tibetans are now anxious that full world publicity should be given to their plight and to the country itself. They are however, sensitive about the country's backwardness and of the (comparatively) insanitary habits of the people – and are anxious that these aspects of the country should not be publicised.
12. Mr. Reid had no information regarding the exact position on Tibet's Eastern Frontier except that the Panchen Lama (a Chinese) [sic!] was being and would be used as a stool pigeon by the Chinese Communists. The caravans from Eastern Tibet were able to reach Lhasa only once a year (from November to March) and the caravans had arrived in Lhasa when Mr. Reid was there. This may well indicate that the Communists do not intend to invade Tibet this winter.
13. Mr. Reid's impression was that the Tibetans had awoken too late to the dangers surrounding them and that they would be unable to offer much resistance to any determined Chinese aggression.

19 January, 1950.

G. D. Anderson.

Notes [by the Editor]

- 1 A handwritten note here is ascribed – 'Tsarong Shape?'; George Tsarong is indeed the son of Tsarong Shape. At the time of writing he lives in Kalimpong.
- 2 This refers to a Russian emigré, Mr Nedbaillof: of whom see Robert Ford, *Captured in Tibet*, Oxford/NY: Oxford University Press, 1990 (first published 1957), pp. 105–6.
- 3 A handwritten note here reads 'No': Reginald Fox was a former Radio Officer at the British Mission Lhasa, see Ford, *op. cit.*, passim.
- 4 Radio Officer Robert Ford was a Tibetan Government employee in Chamdo (*chab mdo*); see Ford, *op. cit.* Lowell Thomas never visited Chamdo, his broadcasts were tape-recorded en route and sent back to America for broadcasting; see Lowell Thomas Jr., *Out of this World: Across the Himalayas to Forbidden Tibet*, New York: Graystone Press, 1950, pp. 16, 32, 55.
Hugh Richardson, Head of the Indian Government Mission in Lhasa until September 1950, was presumably on leave at the time of Reid's visit, or the reference is to British employees of the Tibetan Government.

THE GENESIS OF THE SINO-TIBETAN AGREEMENT OF 1951

Tsering Shakya

Source: P. Kværne (ed.), *Tibetan Studies: Proceedings of the 6th International Seminar of the International Association for Tibetan Studies, Fagernes 1992*, Oslo: The Institute for Comparative Research in Human Culture, 1994, vol. 2, pp. 739–54.

In 1991, the Chinese Government launched a year long celebration to mark the fortieth anniversary of the signing of what is officially known as “the Agreement of the Central People’s Government and the Local Government of Tibet on Measures for the Peaceful Liberation of Tibet”. The Agreement is more commonly known as the “Seventeen-Point Agreement”, signed between Tibet and China in Beijing on 23rd May 1951, and the celebrations forty years later included an exhibition in Beijing of the original documents, with receptions held at Chinese embassies abroad to publicise the event.¹ The Chinese media took the opportunity to publish detailed coverage of their achievements in Tibet over the past forty years.

What was interesting about this celebration was that the Chinese Government resurrected the agreement after ignoring it for nearly thirty years. From 1959 until the time of the celebration, the Chinese had made little or no reference to the agreement. In the past the Chinese government’s stated view was that the Dalai Lama’s flight into exile and the abortive revolt of 1959, made the agreement invalid. In their words he had “torn up the agreement”.² Moreover, the agreement had been superseded by the establishment of an Autonomous Region of Tibet and subsequent constitutional changes in China.

The Dalai Lama and the Tibetan exile organisations had argued that the agreement had been signed under duress and was therefore invalid. On arrival in India 1959, the Tibetan leader had publicly repudiated the agreement. On 20th June 1959 in a statement to the press he announced that,

The agreement which followed the invasion of Tibet was [also] thrust upon its people and government by the threat of arms. It was never accepted by them of their own free will. The consent of the Government was secured under duress and at the point of the bayonet. My representatives were compelled to sign the Agreement under threat of further military operations against Tibet by the invading armies of China leading to utter ravage and ruin of the country. Even the Tibetan seal which was affixed to the Agreement was not the seal of my representatives in Peking, and [has been] kept in their possession ever since.³

Although the question of the legal validity of the agreement and its status in contemporary politics is a perplexing one, for China the agreement is of great historical significance in that it represents the legal and historical basis for Chinese rule in Tibet. The nationwide celebration aimed, internally and internationally, to demonstrate the legality of Chinese rule in Tibet and it was not an accident that the celebration occurred at a critical period in Sino-Tibetan history. The agreement is also of great importance to Tibetans in Tibet, particularly those in the government who argued that Tibet must be regarded as a special case because it had signed the Seventeen-Point Agreement, unlike other regions or minority groups. This point was made by Ngabo Ngawang Jigme (Nga phod Ngag dbang 'jigs med) at the Second Plenary Session of the Fifth Tibet Autonomous Region's Congress, when he delivered a lengthy speech detailing for the first time his account of the signing of the Seventeen-Point Agreement.⁴

Despite the historical importance of the agreement and its significance in contemporary Sino-Tibetan politics, the topic has received scant attention from scholars and we know very little about what occurred during the process of negotiation. Discussion of the subject has been marred by polemic from those who either support the Chinese or the Tibetans' claim; but there are also a number of objective factors preventing scholarly research on the subject. Most published sources are questionable or they are deliberately distorted to support one or the other side; the question of source materials will be examined in detail below. In addition, it may be argued that the events of 1951 are too recent and that until the archives in Beijing and Lhasa are made available for scholarly inspection it will not be possible to reach any definite conclusion on the subject.

The topic is politically sensitive to the Chinese and the Tibetans. On the one hand, if it is proved as claimed by the Dalai Lama, that the agreement was signed under duress and enforced by the Chinese under threat of military action, it would mean that the Chinese presence in Tibet is illegal; if on the other hand, it is shown that the Tibetans voluntarily accepted the agreement, it would mean that the Chinese entry into Tibet was legitimate. Given the stakes that are involved it is understandable that the subject is a sensitive one and that much of the official writing on the topic has obscured rather than shed light on what happened.

The topic is dealt with at some length in Melvyn Goldstein's *A History of Modern Tibet, 1913–1951: The Demise of the Lamaist State* (University of California Press, 1989). However, at the time of its publication the recent account given by Ngabo was not available to Professor Goldstein. Ngabo's account sheds important light on what occurred during the meeting. His account can be regarded as presenting a near accurate description of the time, and it can be assumed that the Chinese concur with his account, which was distributed and published in the *Tibet Daily*.⁵ However, the majority of the articles published on the topic as a part of the fortieth anniversary tended to adhere to the official line and do little to add to our knowledge of the diplomacy surrounding the signing of the agreement.

It is interesting to note that not only Ngabo, the head of the Tibetan delegation, but also most of the other senior Tibetan delegates have written their own accounts of the negotiations. Lhawutara Thupten Tendar (Lha'u rta ra Thub bstan bstan dar), a monk official who was the second most senior member of the Tibetan team, wrote an account which was published in Tibet for internal distribution for the members of the Political

Consultative Committee.⁶ There also exists a biography of Lhawutara written by his secretary and published by the Library of Tibetan Works and Archives, Dharamsala.⁷ Two other Tibetan members of the delegation, Kheme Sonam Wangdu⁸ (Khe smad bSod nams dbang 'dus) and Sampho Tenzin Dhundup (bSam pho bstan 'dzin don grub) have also written their accounts.⁹ A number of valuable sources in British archives and the published papers on the foreign relations of the United States also throw some light on the subject. The United States in particular was involved in Tibetan affairs at the time and attempted to influence Tibetan decisions on the subject.¹⁰

This paper does not seek to provide a legal or theoretical interpretation of the agreement. Drawing on published and unpublished sources I have tried to examine the events and the process leading to the signing of the agreement. The paper merely seeks to add to our factual knowledge of the events surrounding the signing of the agreement. To understand how the agreement came about, we have to go back to the eve of the founding of the People's Republic of China. When the Communists came to power in October 1949, they were quick to make their claim that Tibet was an integral part of China, and during the founding celebrations of the PRC Zhu De, the commander-in-chief of the PLA, announced that one of the last remaining tasks for the PLA was the liberation of Tibet. Despite their rhetoric, the Chinese found that Tibet was for all intents and purposes independent of China. There were no Chinese present in Lhasa and the Guomindang representative had been expelled from Tibet.

The new Chinese Government urged the Tibetans to send a negotiating team to discuss the Tibet problem. In December 1949 the Tibetan Government appointed a negotiation team headed by Tsipon Shakabpa (*rtsis dpon Zhwa sgab pa*), one of the few Tibetan officials with a fairly good knowledge of the outside world and experience of negotiations with foreign powers, having a year earlier led a successful trade mission to the US, Britain and China.¹¹ Shakabpa was instructed to meet the Chinese representative either in Singapore or Hong Kong, but not on any account to go to Beijing for discussions. When the Tibetan team arrived in India and sought British permission to conduct negotiations either in Hong Kong or Singapore, the British refused to allow the negotiations to take place in territories under their rule and advised the Tibetans that the discussions should take place in New Delhi. The Chinese refused to accept the venue for the meeting and insisted that the Tibetan group should go to Beijing. However, there took place in Delhi a long and unofficial negotiation between Shakabpa and the Chinese ambassador, which lasted almost a year. Meanwhile the Chinese had also dispatched a number of emissaries overland, including the Dalai Lama's elder brother, Thupten Norbu, who was in Kumbum monastery in Qinghai, and Geda Rinpoche who was the head lama of Beri monastery in Gansu. Geda had travelled to Chamdo and met with Ngabo, who refused to allow him to proceed to Lhasa. While waiting for instructions from the Kashag in Lhasa, Geda Rinpoche died in Chamdo. The Chinese believed that he was assassinated by the Tibetans and the death of Geda Rinpoche furthered the Chinese suspicion that foreign powers were trying to thwart Chinese attempts to communicate with Lhasa.

On 16th September the newly appointed Chinese ambassador to India, Yuan Zhongxian, met with the Tibetan delegation in Delhi. At the meeting the Tibetan delegation stressed that the traditional relationship between Tibet and China had been one of priest and patron (*mchod yon*).¹² They also said that there were no foreign imperialist influences in Tibet. The Chinese ambassador told the Tibetans that China

could never accept Tibetan independence and gave a copy of the "Common Programme", telling them to study articles 50 to 53.¹³

Yuan also gave them a proposal which listed three points:

- (1) Tibet must be regarded as part of China;
- (2) China would be responsible for Tibet's defence;
- (3) All trade and international relations with foreign countries would be handled by the PRC.¹⁴

Shakabpa replied that he would inform the Kashag of the proposals. On 19th September Shakabpa sent a telegram to Lhasa with the Chinese three-point proposal, recommending that the Kashag accept the proposals. Shakabpa suggested that the point about Tibet being part of China should be accepted only in name.¹⁵ On the point regarding defence Shakabpa recommended that there was no need to station a Chinese army in Tibet, since neither India nor Nepal were a threat to Tibet's security. However, in the event of danger, Tibet should request Chinese assistance. Thirdly, Tibet should insist on the right to maintain direct trade and cultural relations with Nepal and India. Shakabpa also requested that his mission should be allowed to proceed to Peking for further negotiations.

In retrospect we cannot say whether the Shakabpa mission would have achieved a peaceful and better solution to the status of Tibet if it had been allowed to proceed: his request was turned down. The Kashag was not prepared to negotiate with the Chinese since they believed the Chinese proposals would have far-reaching consequences, a strong reaction which may have been influenced by the increasing American willingness to supply aid to Tibet: the Tibetan Government hoped that the USA might provide a last chance for Tibet's survival. By September 1951 the Chinese believed that the Tibetans were deliberately delaying giving a response to their three-point proposal. The Kashag, meanwhile, had observed the growing tension over the possible involvement of China in the Korean War, and instructed Shakabpa to wait and watch the international situation. The Tibetans therefore never communicated Shakabpa's compromise proposal to the Chinese.

On 6th October 1950, the Chinese launched a full-scale military invasion of Tibet and the primitive Tibetan defences in Chamdo collapsed with little resistance. The Chinese made it clear that the failure of the mission to proceed to Peking and the obstacles placed by Britain and India had forced them to adopt a military solution. An editorial in the *People's Daily* on 17th November stated:

The British Government deliberately delayed issuing transit visas for Hong Kong to the Lhasa delegation, making it impossible for them to come to Peking. According to reports from various sources, when the Lhasa delegation were loitering in India, the British High Commissioner Nye and other foreign imperialist elements used every effort to persuade the delegation not to come to any agreement with the Chinese People's Government. Then on the 12th August, when the Indian Government saw that the operations of Chinese Government's forces to enter Tibet were about to begin, they informed the Chinese Government that the British Government had withdrawn its refusal to issue visas to the Tibetan delegation and that facilities for the

departure of the delegation for Peking were available. But more than two months have passed and still “the stairs have been created but no one has come down”. It is obvious that the delay of the Lhasa delegation in coming to Peking to carry on peaceful talks is the result of instigation and obstruction from foreign states who must bear the responsibility for obstructing and sabotaging the peaceful talks. It is only necessary for the local Tibetan authorities to strive to correct their former errors and abandon the erroneous position of relying on foreign influences to resist the entry of the people’s liberation army and the Tibetan question can still be settled peacefully.

It appears that the Tibetans also shared the view that the Chinese attack was prompted by the failure of Britain to provide a visa for the Tibetan negotiating team to travel to China by way of Hong Kong. Shakabpa said in an interview with Reuters in Calcutta that “Chinese forces had entered Tibet. This was because his delegation had been delayed in India due to visa difficulties”.¹⁶ What is most significant about Shakabpa’s negotiation in Delhi is that it shows the extent of the shift that occurred in the Tibetans’ position. It is clear that the position adopted by the Tibetans before the Chinese military action in Chamdo was to preserve the status enjoyed by Tibet since 1913. If the negotiation had taken place in a relatively natural atmosphere and one that was free of Chinese intimidation, it is most likely that the Tibetans would not have given in to Chinese pressure.

The failure of the Tibetans to respond to proposals made by the Chinese through diplomatic channels in Delhi and through various emissaries who came to Lhasa does not in itself explain the reasons for the Chinese use of force. Beijing feared that the Tibetans had been advised by foreign powers not to negotiate and to hold out until the Chinese could be pressurised into making a compromise with the Tibetans. The Chinese would have assumed that there was a possibility that foreign powers might deploy troops in Tibet to bolster the regime and as a means of containing the spread of Communism westward into the Indian sub-continent. The Sino-Tibetan discussion was taking place under the shadow of the Korean war and there was growing concern as to whether the Chinese were going to join the North Korean side or not.

The Chinese were concerned about the American intentions and feared that the USA would use the Korean war as a pretext for the invasion of China: this is crucial to understanding later developments in Tibet. The Chinese would have been aware that while in Delhi Shakabpa and Tibetan officials had held meetings with the American Ambassador Loy Henderson; American interest in the region cannot be ruled out. On 7th October 1950, the day when the Americans crossed the 38th Parallel, the Chinese decided to support the North Koreans and deployed PLA troops in the Korean war. On that same day 40,000 PLA troops from the south-west military region led by Zhang Guohua crossed the Driчу river and attacked Tibetan garrisons in Eastern Tibet. The date of the Chinese attack was very significant in that it was the same date that China announced its military support for the North Koreans. I believe that the decision to invade Tibet was taken in conjunction with their thinking over the Korean situation. The Chinese decision to use force was not only aimed at bringing the Tibetans to the negotiating table but it was also an explicit warning to foreign powers that China was prepared to use military means to find a solution to the Tibet problem and would resist any foreign intervention.

The Chinese caught the Tibetans by surprise. On 19th October 1950 Ngabo Ngawang Jigme, then the commander of the Tibetan army in Eastern Tibet and Governor of Kham, surrendered to the Chinese. The news of the fall of Chamdo and the fear of the imminent arrival of PLA troops in Lhasa alarmed officials in government circles. The Regent, Kashag and abbots of the three great monasteries held a meeting to discuss the situation; it was evident that they did not know how they should respond to the invasion. There were factions who advocated all-out war with the PLA, while others felt a negotiated settlement should be reached. One thing was clear: no one was willing to take charge.¹⁷

Ngabo and his officials feared that the Dalai Lama and the members of Kashag might have escaped to India. Ngabo wrote a report to Lhasa. Because he did not know who was in charge in Lhasa, the report was addressed to “Whoever is in power in Lhasa”.¹⁸ The report gave a glowing account of the behaviour of the PLA and stressed the futility of resisting the Chinese army. He advised Lhasa that a peaceful agreement should be reached with the Chinese.

On 7th December 1950, two messengers (Gyaltzen Phuntsog and Samlingpa Phuntsog Dorje) arrived in Lhasa with a message from Ngabo. They brought a letter addressed to the Dalai Lama and the Kashag which contained the eight-point proposal given to Ngabo by the Chinese. This was the most comprehensive proposal made by the Chinese to date and it included the three-point proposal that Yuan Zhongxian, the Chinese ambassador in Delhi, had put to the Kashag two months earlier. The eight points were:

- (1) China’s policy would be based on the unity and equality of all nationalities.
- (2) Tibet was to remain under the rule of the Dalai Lama.
- (3) Tibetan religion would be protected by the state.
- (4) China was to help Tibet to reform her army and build a common defence against external aggression.
- (5) China was to provide Tibet with expert guidance in matters relating to agriculture, animal husbandry, commerce and industry.
- (6) Administrative reform in Tibet was to be undertaken only after mutual consultation between China and Tibet.
- (7) Those who had collaborated with the Americans, the British and the Kuomintang [Guomindang] would not be persecuted.
- (8) Tibet was to be assured that the central government would not support anti-Tibetan elements like the Tashilhunpo and Reting factions.¹⁹

On 12th December 1950 the National Assembly discussed the eight proposals received from Chamdo. At the same time the Kashag and the abbots of the three monasteries held a secret meeting on the security of the Dalai Lama. It was agreed that it was not safe for the Dalai Lama to remain in Lhasa. Some argued that the Chinese could not be trusted and that the Communists’ offer was “trying to lure a fly with honey spread on a sharp knife”.²⁰ In the end, due to growing fear that the Chinese would march into Lhasa, the National Assembly agreed to negotiate with the Chinese. Shortly after the arrival of the messengers from Chamdo, Ngabo had secretly dispatched a separate message which stated that he was no longer free to act independently and was conforming to the wishes of his captors and that the government should take any action necessary, without worrying about Ngabo himself or other officials.²¹

On the night of 16th December 1950, the Dalai Lama, dressed as a commoner, accompanied by two tutors and the members of the Kashag, left Lhasa for Dromo, a small town near the Indo-Tibetan border. Before the Dalai Lama left Lhasa Lukhangwa Tsewang Rapten (Klu khang ba Tshe dbang rab brtan) and Lobsang Tashi (bLo bzang bkra shis) were appointed as the joint caretaker Prime Ministers (*srid tshab*). The Dalai Lama and the Kashag also appointed Sampho Tenzin Dhundup and Khenchung Thupten Legmon (*mkhan chung* Thub bstan legs smon) to proceed to Chamdo to assist Ngabo. The delegation reached Chamdo in the end of February, and Sampho handed Ngabo the letter from the Kashag, which authorised him to hold discussions with the Chinese. The letter also stated that he (Ngabo) must insist on Tibetan independence and must not accept the stationing of PLA troops in Tibet.

Ngabo thought the points were unrealistic and that there was no scope for discussion with the Chinese, since it was clear that they were determined to gain control of Tibet. Sampho also gave him a five-point written statement as the starting point for discussions with the Chinese:

- (1) There is no imperialist influence in Tibet; the little contact Tibet had with the British was the result of the travels of the 13th Dalai Lama to India. As for the relationship with the United States, this was only commercial.
- (2) In the event of foreign imperial influence being exerted on Tibet, the Tibetan government would appeal to China for help.
- (3) Chinese troops stationed in Kham should be withdrawn.
- (4) The territories taken by Manchu China, the Kuomintang [Goumindang] and the new government of China must be returned to Tibet.
- (5) The Chinese Government should not be influenced by the followers of the Panchen Lama and Reting factions.²²

Ngabo knew that the five points would be unacceptable and that they might infuriate the Chinese. He asked Sampho if he had received any oral instruction from the Kashag. Sampho did not even know whether they were to negotiate with the Chinese at Chamdo or were to proceed directly to Beijing. When Ngabo gave the statement to the Chinese, they repudiated it point by point:

- (1) It was clear that the British and American imperialists had interfered in the internal affairs of China. It was evident from the fact that they had prevented the negotiating team from leaving India.
- (2) The defence of the Motherland was the prime objective of the PLA and it was imperative that the PLA should defend the frontiers of the Motherland.
- (3) The existing political system and the status of the Dalai Lama would not be altered. However, in the event of the Dalai Lama going into exile, he would lose all his power and status.
- (4) Tibet would enjoy regional autonomy.
- (5) China would not interfere in internal political rivalry and factions.²³

In January 1951, the Tibetan Government dispatched Surkhang Dzasa and Chomphel Thubten to New Delhi to meet with the Chinese Ambassador and discuss

a venue for a meeting. They agreed that the meeting would be held in Peking and that for the duration of the meeting, Chinese troops would not proceed any further into Tibet. Unknown to the Dalai Lama and the Kashag in Dromo, Ngabo had met with Wang Chimen, the commander of the Chinese forces and secured his agreement that the negotiations should take place in Lhasa. Ngabo immediately radioed Lhasa for permission for a small delegation of Chinese to proceed to Lhasa for discussions. The two Prime Ministers, Lhukhang and Lobsang Tashi in Lhasa accepted Ngabo's suggestion and authorised a Chinese delegation to come to Lhasa for discussions. At the same time Ngabo received a telegram from the Dalai Lama, via the Chinese embassy in Delhi, instructing him to proceed to Beijing for discussions. Ngabo later wrote that since the Dalai Lama's order superseded instructions from the Kalons, on 22nd March his party in Chamdo reluctantly proceeded to Beijing.²⁴

When Shakabpa was appointed to negotiate with the Chinese, he was instructed that the venue should be either Hong Kong or Singapore because it was agreed that once the Tibetan delegation was in Beijing, they would be exposed to an unacceptable degree of Chinese pressure. But in Dromo the Kashag felt that once a Chinese delegation had been allowed to come to Lhasa, even if the negotiation failed there was a danger that the delegation may set themselves up in Lhasa as the representatives of the new Chinese Government. Since the main Tibetan objective at the time was to keep any Chinese presence out of Lhasa, it seemed wise to prevent them from gaining a foothold in the city. However, it seems to me that the decision to shift the venue to Beijing was a crucial mistake by the Tibetans.

The Kashag also appointed Lhawutara Thupten Tendar and Kheme Sonam Wangdu to proceed to Beijing via India. They were assisted by Takla Phuntsog Tashi as the Chinese interpreter and Sandu Lobsang Rinchen as the English interpreter. The delegation was provided with a written document with the names of five representatives; Ngabo Ngawang Jigme was named as the chief Tibetan representative. The delegation was given instructions that it should on no account accept Chinese sovereignty over Tibet. The delegation was to refer all important points back to Dromo for consultation, and for that purpose a direct wireless communication would be established between Beijing and Dromo. It was clear that although Ngabo was appointed as the chief representative, he did not have any authority to make decisions without further consultation with the Kashag and the Dalai Lama. The delegation was also given a ten-point verbal proposal which they were to raise with the Chinese.

On their way to Beijing, the Tibetan delegation went to Delhi where, on 24th March, they met with the Indian Prime minister, Jawaharlal Nehru. Lhawutara presented a letter from the Dalai Lama and asked Nehru's advice on the forthcoming talks. The Tibetans also asked whether India could mediate between Tibet and China.²⁵ Nehru made no comment on this point. According to Lhawutara, Nehru advised them that the Chinese would insist on three points. Firstly, the Tibetans would have to accept the Chinese claim that Tibet was a part of China. According to Nehru, Chinese claims over Tibet were internationally recognised. Secondly, the Tibetans would have to surrender the right to conduct their own external affairs. Thirdly, the Tibetans *must not agree* to the stationing of Chinese troops in Tibet, since this would have serious repercussions on India. Nehru's statement was a great disappointment for the Tibetan delegation. Now the Tibetan delegation was leaving for Beijing in the knowledge that India was not prepared to support Tibetan independence.²⁶

Ngabo, the chief representative, Sampbo Tenzin Dhundup and Khunchung Thupten Legmon arrived in Beijing on 22nd April. Lhawutara and Kheme Sonam Wangdu arrived four days later on 26th April 1950. While the Tibetan delegation was in Beijing, they were informed that the Panchen Rinpoche and his retinue would be arriving in Beijing and the Chinese asked if they would come to the railway station to welcome him. Ngabo, not wanting to give any impression of formal recognition of the Panchen Rinpoche, suggested that only the junior members of the Tibetan delegation, Sampho, Takla and Sandu Rinchen, should go to the railway station. The presence of the Panchen Lama and his retinue were to become a major stumbling block during the course of the negotiations.

Lhawutara and Kheme brought further instructions from the Kashag which stated that at first the delegation must make a claim for Tibetan independence and argue that the past relationship between Tibet and China had been that of "Priest and Patron". If the discussion reached deadlock, then they could accept Tibet as part of China, on the following conditions namely that:

- (1) Tibet must enjoy full internal independence.²⁷
- (2) No Chinese troops would be stationed in Tibet.
- (3) The Tibetan army would be responsible for defence.
- (4) The Chinese representative to Lhasa, his personal staff and guards must not exceed one hundred men.
- (5) The Chinese representative must be a Buddhist.²⁸

The Tibetan delegation discussed the proposals and agreed that these terms would be unacceptable to the Chinese. Ngabo send a telegram to Dromo stating that it was impossible not to accept Chinese troops in Tibet and that there would otherwise be no scope for discussion. The Kashag's reply once again insisted that no Chinese troops should be deployed in Tibet, but they proposed a strange solution: the existing Tibetan army could be incorporated into the Chinese army and would be responsible for defence.²⁹

The Tibetan delegation met once again to discuss the Kashag's reply. Ngabo stated that the Kashag had already agreed to make a major concession in accepting Tibet as part of China, and therefore all other issues were only minor. He scornfully remarked, "Who would have heard of a Communist Buddhist?". The remark implied that the Kashag was not well informed. Then Ngabo stated that there was no point in referring all the matters back to Dromo, since the Kashag had agreed on the most important point. Moreover, there would be a considerable delay if every single point were referred back to Dromo, from where the Kashag and the National Assembly would take days to reply. In the event of a long delay the Chinese might resume their military actions.³⁰

On 29th April 1951, the Tibetan and Chinese delegations met in an army headquarters in Beijing. The Chinese group was headed by Li Weihan, who was one of the key members of the Communist Party. Li had studied in France in the early 1920s and was one of the co-founders of the French section of the CCP. In 1944 he became director of the Party's United Front Work Department and the Chairman of the Nationalities Affairs Commission of the State Council. Li was assisted by Zhang Guohua, who was the leader of the 18th Corps of the Second Field Army, which led the PLA's invasion of Tibet, and Zhang Jingwu, another PLA officer who was

directly involved in the invasion of Tibet, together with Sun Zhiyuan. The significance of Li's appointment, and of the fact that the negotiations were carried out by the United Front section of the Party, was that the Chinese regarded the Tibetan issue as essentially one of internal affairs. The United Front Work Department was primarily concerned with gaining control and influence over non-Communists and minority groups. The Tibetan delegation was not aware of the significance of this. As far as the Tibetans were concerned they were dealing with the Chinese.

On the first day the formal meeting only lasted for half an hour. They merely agreed to draw up a written statement on their respective positions and then the meeting ended. On the second day, Li Wei-han presented a proposal, which was more or less the same as the proclamation issued by the South-West Military Command in Chamdo after its capture by the PLA. He suggested that the Tibetan delegation should study the proposal and that then they should meet again. The meeting was resumed on 2nd May, when the Chinese delegation explained each point of their proposal. According to Phuntsog Tashi Takla the Chinese delivered their position rather like a lecture, with a mixture of Communist interpretation of recent history and their nationalities policy.

When Ngabo opened the discussion, he declared that Tibet had been an independent country and the past relationship with China had been one of priest-patron and that there was no need to deploy Chinese troops in Tibet.³¹ Li Wei-han responded by saying that the question of the status of Tibet was not under discussion and Chinese sovereignty over Tibet was unnegotiable. He added that it was a historical fact that Tibet formed an integral part of China, and her claim over Tibet was internationally recognised. He went on to say that the purpose of the meeting was to discuss the proposal that had been submitted and that no other issues should be added to the agenda.³² It was clear to the Tibetan delegation that the Chinese could not be moved from their position and, moreover, the Tibetans had no manoeuvring points to counter tight control by the Chinese over the agenda for the discussion. It became apparent to the Tibetan delegation that what was expected of them was to ratify the proposal presented to them.³³ In subsequent meetings the Chinese and Tibetan delegation discussed each of the articles of the Seventeen-Point Agreement. The Tibetan delegation made some minor changes in the wording, and in fact much of the discussion centred around semantic issues. The newly coined Communist terminology which was used in the text was difficult to translate into Tibetan.³⁴ The discussion of the semantics suggested that there was a general agreement, and in subsequent meetings the Chinese and Tibetan delegations discussed each of the articles of the Seventeen-Point Agreement. The Tibetan delegation made some minor changes in the wording.

But by the 10th of May the meeting threatened to break down. The Chinese were proposing that the Central Peoples' Government (CPG) would set up a Military and Administrative Commission in Tibet. Lhawutara asked what the functions of the Commission would be. Li Wei-han stated that the Commission would be responsible for the implementation of the agreement and would "decide" all important political and military issues. Lhawutara pressed further saying that this would contradict the assurance that the power and status of the Dalai Lama and the existing political system would not be altered (meaning that the final decision would be made by the Tibetan Government). At this point Li Wei-han got irritated and said: "Are you showing your clenched fist to the Communist Party? If you disagree then you can

leave, whenever you like. It is up to you to choose whether Tibet would be liberated peacefully or by force. It is only a matter of sending a telegram to the PLA group to recommence their march into Tibet".³⁵

The meeting ended abruptly, and for several days the Tibetan delegation was taken on a sightseeing tour. Lhawutara writes that he feared the Chinese might have already ordered the PLA to march into Tibet. He asked Ngabo to find out from the Chinese if they had. The Chinese insisted that it was necessary to set up the "Military and Administrative Commission" in Tibet. The Commission would be the representative of the CPG and be responsible for the implementation of the agreement. It would also be responsible for "unifying the command of all armed forces in Tibet in order to safeguard the national defence". Li Weihan also tried to reassure the Tibetans that they should observe the behaviour of the PLA for a while. In time they would see that the PLA were making a constructive contribution in Tibet.³⁶ Moreover, he told the Tibetans that "the PLA movement into Tibet is the established policy of the Central Government, since Tibet is an integral part of Chinese territory and all China must be liberated". It was evident that the key to Chinese policy in Tibet was the establishment of the Military and Administrative Commission. This would form a parallel administrative organ. It was clear that the Chinese were determined not to compromise on this point.

In the end the Tibetans decided not to raise any objections and the meeting was resumed. There were no other points of disagreement. However, they were anxious that the Kashag might not approve of the agreement. Ngabo told the Chinese that if the Dalai Lama and the Kashag approved the agreement, it was all well and good. But should they repudiate the agreement and the Dalai Lama escape abroad, they would need some form of guarantee that the power and the status of the Dalai Lama would be protected. Therefore the Tibetan delegation proposed a new clause to the agreement, which stated that in the event of the Dalai Lama going into exile, he could remain outside Tibet for four or five years and during this period he would maintain his existing status and power. The Dalai Lama could observe the prevailing conditions and progress from outside and if he chose to return to Tibet, his status would be reinstated. The Chinese made no objections, but insisted that this should not be included in the main agreement and that it would form part of a separate clause.³⁷ This was to become the first article of a seven-part secret agreement. Another important clause stated that after the establishment of the Tibet Military Commission, one or two members of the Kashag would hold positions in the Commission. Other clauses dealt with the phasing out of Tibetan currency, and the right of the Tibetans to maintain a small police force.

On 17th May 1951, the two delegations met to discuss the draft of the agreement. When the meeting opened Li Weihan stated that now the problems concerning the "Central" (*dbus gzhung*) and the "Local" (*sa gnas gzhung*) government had been resolved. However, there remained the internal problem, arising from the conflict between the 13th Dalai Lama and the 9th Panchen Rinpoche. It is imperative that this was also solved. Therefore Li Weihan asked Ngabo what instructions he had received from the Kashag regarding the 10th Panchen Rinpoche. Ngabo said he was sent to Peking to discuss relationships between Tibet and China, and he did not have any power to discuss internal affairs of Tibet. If the Chinese Government wanted to discuss the issue, it should be dealt with separately.³⁸

Li Weihan went on to say: "This is your internal business, but at the same time in order to solve the Tibetan issue, it is impossible not to discuss the question. This question must be settled! Regarding the method for reconciliation between the Dalai Lama and Banqen [Panchen] Lama, mutual agreement must be reached through negotiation".³⁹ He also stated that if this issue was not solved then there was no point in signing the agreement. The threat irritated Ngabo who announced that he was happy to return to Chamdo and he would be instructing the other Tibetan delegates to return to Lhasa. At this point the meeting again broke down and the Tibetan delegations returned to their hotel.⁴⁰

The Chinese decision to raise the question of the Panchen Rinpoche was no doubt prompted by a strong lobbying campaign carried on by his supporters in Beijing. However, it is also a well-known Chinese negotiating tactic of "dislocating" the other side by raising a totally unexpected issue and effectively making use of their weakness.⁴¹ It was apparent from Ngabo's response that the issue was a sore point for the Tibetans. The Chinese had raised the issue to gain maximum concessions and it was also an implicit warning that if Ngabo and his delegation failed to sign the agreement, they had other means of mobilising support in Tibet.

It was interesting that Ngabo stubbornly refused to discuss the Panchen Rinpoche issue although he knew that the Dalai Lama and the Kashag had agreed to recognise the 10th Panchen Rinpoche. When he heard that the Panchen Rinpoche had arrived in Peking, Ngabo had immediately telegraphed the Kashag and advised that they recognise the 10th Panchen Rinpoche otherwise there would be difficulties in reaching an agreement with the Chinese. The Kashag replied that they had received representations from the Tashilhunpo authorities, who had appealed to the Dalai Lama to recognise the same 10th Panchen Rinpoche. The Dalai Lama and the Kashag had reached the decision to accept their request.⁴²

Back in Beijing the deadlock continued. One morning at 9 o'clock, Sun Zhiyuan accompanied by Baba Phuntsog Wangyal came to the hotel where Ngabo was staying to discuss the issue of Panchen Rinpoche. Ngabo adamantly refused to be drawn into this discussion. Sun Zhiyuan insisted the issue must be settled. The meeting lasted until 6 o'clock in the evening when Sun Zhiyuan finally suggested that they could agree to the phrase that "the relationship between the Dalai Lama and the Panchen Lama should be based on the amicable relationship that existed between the 13th Dalai Lama and the 9th Panchen Lama". Ngabo raised no objection. Later this became clauses five and six of the agreements.⁴³

On 23rd May, the Chinese and Tibetan delegations signed the final copy of the agreement. The preamble stated that Tibet had been part of China for the past "hundred years or more" and that imperialist forces had caused disunity between the Tibetan and Han nationalities. It further stated that "The Local Government of Tibet did not oppose imperialist deception and provocation, but adopted an unpatriotic attitude towards the great Motherland". The first article stated that "the Tibetan people shall return to the big family of the Motherland, the People's Republic of China".

During the course of the meeting the Chinese asked Ngabo if he was empowered with authority to sign the agreement. Ngabo replied that he had been given full authority to sign. They also asked if the delegation had brought their seals to place on the document. Ngabo told the Chinese that he did not have the seal. It was true

that other members of the delegation did not have their seals with them, but Ngabo was in possession of the seal of the Governor of Kham, which he could have affixed to the document. Ngabo later told Phala that he refused to use the original seal because he wanted to show that he did not approve of the Agreement.⁴⁴ The Chinese proposed that new seals should be made, which the Tibetan delegation agreed to. Later Tibetan exiles claimed that the Chinese forged seals and affixed them to the document.

As far as the Chinese were concerned the agreement came into effect immediately after the signing. It is not clear why the Tibetans did not insist upon keeping the agreement secret until the Kashag and the Dalai Lama had the chance to ratify the agreement. It may be that it was beyond the power of the Tibetan delegation to prevent the Chinese from publicising the agreement. The extensive international publicity given to the signing of the agreement gave China a major propaganda and diplomatic victory. The international community accepted the agreement as a *fait accompli*. For the Chinese it was a political necessity that they should announce to the world the peaceful resolution of the Tibetan problem.

The Tibetan delegation dispatched a telegram to Dromo, informing the Kashag and the Dalai Lama that an agreement and a secret clause had been signed. The Dalai Lama wrote that he first heard of the agreement on the 26th May in Dromo, on Radio Peking. The Dalai Lama described his initial reaction to the announcement:

We first came to know of it from a broadcast which Ngabo made on Peking Radio. It was a terrible shock when we heard the terms of it. We were appalled at the mixture of Communist clichés, vainglorious assertions which were completely false, and bold statements which were only partly true and the terms were far worse and more oppressive than anything we had imagined.⁴⁵

The Tibetan government was clearly shocked and alarmed by the terms of the agreement. Some officials urged the Dalai Lama to leave Dromo and seek asylum in India. Others felt they should wait until members of the delegation returned to Tibet and gave their explanation. From Dromo the Kashag immediately dispatched a telegram to Ngabo requesting the full text of the agreement and the secret clause. The delegation was instructed to remain in Peking until further notice. Ngabo replied that because of the secret nature of the separate agreement, he was not willing to dispatch it on the wireless. He bluntly stated that the agreement had been signed and that if the Kashag was not satisfied with the agreement then they should send a new team to Beijing.⁴⁶

The Tibetan delegation left Beijing in two groups, the Chinese telling Ngabo that he must return via Chamdo because they feared for his safety. In reality the Chinese were suspicious that Ngabo might not return to Tibet and would remain in India. Ngabo and Thupten Legmon returned by the land route.

The Tibetan Government in Dromo clearly found it unacceptable that the agreement compromised Tibet's independent status and, moreover, they were concerned that the Tibetan delegation had agreed to the deployment of Chinese troops in Tibet. Ngabo was not empowered to sign the agreement and his decision to sign the agreement was clearly *ultra vires*. This would have been sufficient grounds for repudiating

the agreement.⁴⁷ Yet the Kashag did not want to denounce the agreement immediately without hearing what the Tibetan delegation had to say. They were suspicious that the delegation in Beijing might have been coerced into signing the agreement. The Tibetans once again turned to the United States for help.

In this short article I do not wish to deal at length with the American involvement in the affair. It is sufficient to point out that the U.S. clearly wanted the Tibetans to repudiate the agreement. They made representations to the Dalai Lama, and influential members of the Tibetan Government advised that the agreement should be renounced and that the Dalai Lama should seek asylum abroad. Moreover the Americans explicitly warned that the Tibetans could only expect their support if they denounced the agreement. In the end for various reasons the Tibetans did not heed the advice from the Americans.

There was a strong faction who were adamant that the Dalai Lama should return to Lhasa and accept the agreement as the best possible solution. This group was led by the most influential section of Tibetan society: the abbots of the three great monasteries who had recently arrived from Lhasa to urge the Dalai Lama to return. They were supported by the Dalai Lama's senior tutor Ling Rinpoche. The faction which advocated that the Dalai Lama should seek asylum and repudiate the agreement was led by Phala Thupten Woden, Surkhang Wangchuk Gelek and Trijang Lobsang Yeshe. This faction was supported by Shakabpa and Thubten Norbu, the Dalai Lama's elder brother, who had been responsible for mustering international support.

In Dromo, a meeting attended by thirty officials was held to decide whether the Dalai Lama should return to Lhasa or seek asylum in India. Tsipon Namseling Paljor Jigme opened the meeting by stating that the Seventeen-Point Agreement was a mistake and it must be repudiated. He urged the meeting to petition the Dalai Lama to leave for India. Namseling was followed by Dronyigchenmo Chomphel Thupten, who was a monk official and exercised considerable influence over the religious community. He was in favour of accepting the agreement and of the Dalai Lama returning to Lhasa. He stated that the agreement was correct and he did not believe that the Tibetan delegates had sold Tibet out. "We have looked for foreign support but it has been fruitless and in the future it is unlikely that the foreign governments will support us. Therefore it is best that the Dalai Lama should return to Lhasa".⁴⁸

Shokhang Dhundup Dorji supported Chomphel Thupten and said that for over a year Shakabpa had been in India seeking international support, and what had been achieved? He urged them to accept the agreement and to return with the Dalai Lama to Lhasa. The majority of the religious and secular officials endorsed the sentiments expressed by Chomphel Thupten and Shokhang. Later Shokhang told his son, "No matter what happens, we have made up our mind to persuade His Holiness the Dalai Lama to return to Lhasa. On no account should he go abroad".⁴⁹

Tsipon Namseling Paljor Jigme, who openly advocated that the Dalai Lama should leave for India was only a 4th rank official. Although there were a number of high ranking officials who were in favour of denouncing the agreement, none of them spoke at the meeting. This faction concentrated on influencing the Dalai Lama personally. It was thought that the Dalai Lama's family was in favour of him seeking asylum in India. The meeting did not discuss in detail the Seventeen-Point Agreement. Kheme and Lhawutara made a detailed report to the Kashag and were told that the final decision would be made in Lhasa. Kheme and Lhawutara were not granted an

audience with the Dalai Lama, and this was meant to show his disapproval of the agreement.⁵⁰

At the end of September 1951, the National Assembly met to discuss the agreement in Lhasa. The meeting was attended by over three hundred officials. Normally the *Shape* (members of Kashag) were not allowed to attend the meeting. Ngabo told the two Prime Ministers that he should be given the opportunity to address the meeting, along with the other members who signed the agreement, because as the head of the delegation he should explain the terms of the agreement and that he wished to clear his name from the allegations and rumour that he had been offered bribes by the Chinese.⁵¹

When the meeting began, the members of the delegation who had gone to Beijing were seated in a separate area. Ngabo was the first to speak. He opened the meeting by stating that neither he nor any member of the delegation had accepted any bribes from the Chinese. He had only received a photo of Mao and a box of tea as presents during his stay in Beijing. Ngabo spoke for nearly an hour and a half. He explained the instructions he had received from Dromo. He argued that the agreement did not endanger the status and the power of the Dalai Lama, nor would it harm the religious and political system of Tibet. Therefore he urged the Assembly to accept the agreement. If however the Assembly decided to repudiate the agreement, maintaining that he (Ngabo) had acted without full authorisation, then he was willing to accept any punishment that the Assembly imposed on him, including the death sentence. After Ngabo had given his speech, the delegation to Beijing left the meeting.⁵²

The National Assembly finally recommended the Dalai Lama to accept the agreement. The memorandum from the Assembly to the Dalai Lama stated that the agreement did not threaten the status and power of the Dalai Lama and that the religious and political system of Tibet would not be in danger. Zhang Jingwu, the newly appointed Chinese representative to Tibet, had been urging the Dalai Lama to issue a public acceptance of the agreement since his arrival in Tibet. Now that the National Assembly had accepted the agreement, it was no longer possible to stall a public announcement. The National Assembly had also recommended that the Dalai Lama should make such an announcement.

On 20th October 1951, a year and thirteen days after the Chinese invasion of Chamdo, a letter of acceptance of the agreement was drafted and given to Phuntsog Tashi Takla to translate into Chinese. When the letter was shown to Zhang Jingwu, he immediately objected to the use of the terms "China and Tibet" (*rGya-Bod*). He insisted that since they regarded Tibet as a part of China, and that the term China naturally included Tibet, the use of the terms "Tibet and China" implied separate nations. Zhang Jingwu wanted the letter to use the terms "Central Government" (*dbus gzhung*) and "Local Government" (*sa gnas gzhung*).⁵³ On 24th October 1950, the letter was dispatched as a telegram to Mao:

The Tibet Local Government as well as the ecclesiastic and secular People unanimously support this agreement, and under the leadership of Chairman Mao and the Central People's Government, will actively support the People's Liberation Army in Tibet to consolidate national defence, drive out imperialist influences from Tibet and safeguard the unification of the territory and the sovereignty of the Motherland.⁵⁴

A few days later, on 28th October, the Panchen Rinpoche made a similar public statement accepting the agreement. He urged the “people of Shigatse to give active support” to carrying out the agreement.⁵⁵

The National Assembly and the Dalai Lama’s acceptance of the Seventeen-Point Agreement ended the independence Tibet had enjoyed since 1911. Tibet became a region of China. The most vocal supporters of the agreement came from the monastic community: they felt that the agreement gave a guarantee that Tibet’s traditional social system would not be altered and that the Chinese had no interest but to secure their symbolic claim over Tibet. Tibet’s traditional elite was governed by narrow self-interest. The preservation of the existing social order (which safeguarded their power and privileges) was seen as synonymous with the legal status of Tibet.

In the end for the Tibetan elite the Seventeen-Point Agreement to some extent met the need to safeguard Tibet’s cultural and social independence. The agreement guaranteed that (1) the existing political system would function as before; (2) the power and privileges of the ruling elite would be protected; and (3) religious freedom would be protected. Moreover, the agreement did not even mention the words “socialism” or “communism”. It merely stated that “various reforms” would be carried out according to the local conditions and the wishes of the Tibetan people. As a result many Tibetans were willing to accept the agreement.

Finally there were strong factions in Tibet who felt that the agreement was acceptable and that Communist China and Buddhist Tibet could co-exist peacefully. This section was led by the religious community, whose main concern was the protection of the “existing system”. The Tibetans’ acceptance was not based on a legal interpretation of the agreement, which transformed Tibet’s international legal status from one of an independent state to a region of China. In the Tibetans’ view their independence was not a question of international legal status, but as Dawa Norbu writes, “Our sense of independence was based on the independence of our way of life and culture, which was more real to the unlettered masses than law or history, canons by which the non-Tibetans decide the fate of Tibet”.⁵⁶

However, in the final analysis, it must be recognised that the Chinese would not have secured the agreement had they confined themselves to diplomatic means. As we have seen, the Tibetans were determined initially to maintain their independence. It was only after the Chinese had invaded and the Tibetans’ attempts to secure international support had failed that Tibet was forced to seek a dialogue with the Chinese. Once the Chinese had shown their military might the Tibetans had no choice but to reach a diplomatic compromise. This was the first formal agreement between Tibet and Communist China and it established the legal basis for Chinese rule in Tibet.

Notes

- 1 Some Western Governments refused to attend these functions as a protest against the abuse of human rights in Tibet.
- 2 “How the Tibetan Reactionaries Sabotaged the 17-Article Agreement”, *Peking Review*, May 1959: 16–19.
- 3 A statement issued by the Dalai Lama at a Press Conference held in Mussoorie on 20th June 1959.
- 4 Nga phod Ngag dbang ’jigs med, “*Rang skyong ljongs mi dmangs ’thus tshogs rgyun mthud kyi kru’u rin Nga phod Ngag dbang ’jigs med kyis rang skyong ljongs kyis skabs lnga pa’i*”

- mi dmangs 'thus tshogs du thengs gnyis pa'i thog gnang ba'i gal che'i gsungs bshad*" Lhasa (1989).
- 5 I have been told that the speech was published in the *Tibet Daily*, but I have not seen a published copy. The copy in my possession is a typeset copy marked for internal distribution only.
- 6 Lha'u rta ra Thub bstan bstan dar, "Bod zhi bas bcings 'grol 'byung thabs skor gyi gros thun tshan bcu bdun la ming rtags bkod pa'i sngon rjes su", *Bod kyi rig gnas lo rgyus rgyu cha bdam bsgrigs* 1 (1982): 88–117.
- 7 bsTan 'dzin rgyal mtshan, *Lha'u rta ra'i lo rgyus*, Library of Tibetan Works & Archives (LTWA), Dharamsala, 1983.
- 8 Khe smed bSod nams dbang 'dus, *rGas po'i lo rgyus 'bel gtam*, LTWA. Dharamsala, 1982.
- 9 bSam 'grub po brang bsTan 'dzin don grub, *Mi tshe'i rba rlabs 'khrugs po*, (privately published) Rajpur, 1987.
- 10 See *Foreign Relations of the United States*, East Asia, 6 (1951): 1696–1743.
- 11 For details of Shakabpa's Mission to Britain, see Tsering Shakya, "1948 Trade Mission to United Kingdom", *The Tibet Journal* 4 (1990): 95–114.
- 12 Here I have used the term "priest and patron" as used by Shakabpa in his book *Tibet: A Political History*. (Yale University Press, 1967): 229. Generally the term "priest and patron" gives a misleading rendering of the Tibetan term *mchod yon*. For a discussion on the topic see D. Seyfort Rugg, "MCHOD YON, YON MCHOD and MCHOD GNAS/YON GNAS: On the Historiography and Semantic of a Tibetan Religio-social and Religio-political concept", in Ernst Steinkellner, ed. *Tibetan History and Language*, Wien, (1991): 440–453.
- 13 Shakabpa writes that he was given a booklet, and does not seem to be aware that it was actually the "Common Programme" and that articles 50–53 were the basis of the Communist policy towards minority groups.
- 14 Zhwa sgab pa dBang phyug bde ldan, *Bod kyi srid don rgyal rabs*, Privately published, Kalimpong (1976): 420.
- 15 *Ibid.*; in Tibetan, "bed ming tsam gyi rgyal khongs zhal bzhes gnang rgyu". The term *ming tsam* (only in name) is used as a rendering of the Western term "suzerainty".
- 16 Public Record Office, London, FO 371-84469.
- 17 Soon after the Chinese invasion the Regent Taktra was ousted from power and on 17th November 1951 the 14th Dalai Lama assumed full political power.
- 18 Nga phod Ngag dbang 'jigs med 1989.
- 19 The eight-point proposal was recorded in the monthly report (15th December 1950) from the Indian Mission in Lhasa. Public Record Office, London, DO (Dominion Office) 35/3096.
- 20 *Ibid.*
- 21 *Ibid.*
22. Lu'o Yus hung, "Bod zhi bas bcings 'grol skor gyi nyin tho gnad bshus", *Bod kyi rig gnas lo rgyus rgyu cha bdam bsgrigs* 1 (1982): 117–170.
- 23 Takla Phuntsog Tashi, "The Seventeen-Point Agreement Between Tibet and China in 1951". (Unpublished) 1991.
- 24 Nga phod Ngag dbang 'jigs med 1989.
- 25 Lha'u rta ra Thub bstan bstan dar 1982: 104. This account of the meeting was confirmed by Takla Phuntsog Tashi. Indian records of the meeting slightly differ from the account given by Lhawutara. The Indian records make no mention of Tibet's request for the GOI to mediate between China and Tibet.
- 26 *Ibid.*
- 27 In Tibetan, "nang khul du rang btsan rang bdag".
- 28 Nga phod Ngag dbang 'jigs med 1989.
- 29 *Ibid.*
- 30 *Ibid.*
- 31 Lha'u rta ra Thub bstan bstan dar 1982: 105.
- 32 Interview with Takla Phuntsog Tashi.
- 33 A writer with long experience of negotiating with the Chinese noted "it can be argued that limiting the agenda in one's favour is a common tactic of international negotiations and no monopoly of the Chinese. Yet the Chinese seem to attach a special importance to the

agenda, and the intensity with which they insist on the inclusion or exclusion of certain subjects surprises many international negotiators. Agreement to put a subject on the agenda seems to imply to the Chinese a certain concession on the matter. The Chinese do not share the view widely held in western countries that agreement on the agenda does not necessarily prejudice the nature of a negotiation.” Oguru Kazuo, “How the “Inscrutables” Negotiate with the “Inscrutables”: Chinese Negotiating Tactics *Vis-a-Vis* the Japanese”, *The China Quarterly*, 79 (1979): 528–552.

The Tibetans’ experience seems to confirm Oguru Kazuo’s statement. For the Chinese to place the question of the status of Tibet on the agenda would be seen as recognising Tibet’s separate identity. As far as the Chinese were concerned Tibet was an integral part of PRC and it did not matter what the Tibetans thought about their status.

- 34 Words such as “the People” and “Liberation”, see Huang Mingxin, “The Tibetan Version of the 17-Article Agreement”, *China’s Tibet*, Autumn 1991: 12–15. It is interesting to note that author writes, “In the Tibetan language, there was no word which meant “China”. When the Tibetans use the word, “*rgya nag*” this excludes the Tibetans, and explicitly recognises Tibetan separateness from China.”
- 35 Lha’u rta ra Thub bstan bstan dar 1982: 106–107. In his account published in Tibet Lhawutara does not mention the incident. However, he writes that, as instructed by the Kashag, he objected to the deployment of PLA in Tibet and therefore the meeting broke down for several days.
- Accounts published in India by members of the delegation agree that the meeting broke down because of Lhawutara’s questioning and Li Wei-han’s statement. See; bSam ’grub pho brang bstan ’dzin don grub, 1987: 109. A biography of Lhawutara by his former secretary Tenzin Gyaltzen (bsTan ’dzin rgyal mtshan, 1988: 20–21) also confirms the threat made by Li Wei-han. In an interview Phuntsog Tashi Takla also concurred this account.
- 36 Jiang Ping, “Great Victory for the Cause of National Unity and Progress”, *China’s Tibet*, Spring 1991: 8–9.
- 37 Nga phod Ngag dbang ’jigs med 1989.
- 38 *Ibid.*
- 39 Jiang Ping 1991: 8.
- 40 Nga phod Ngag dbang ’jigs med 1989.
- 41 Oguru Kazuo 1979: 535.
- 42 Nga phod Ngag dbang ’jigs med 1989.
- 43 *Ibid.*
- 44 Phala Thupten Woden, Oral History Collection of the LTWA, Dharamsala.
- 45 The Dalai Lama, *My Land and My People*, New York, Potala, 1985: 88.
- 46 Nga phod Ngag dbang ’jigs med 1989.
- 47 There are two grounds on which an agreement could be rejected (1) if it can be shown that duress was applied to the individual members of the delegation and (2) if that delegation exceeded their instructions or acted at variance with them. It is difficult to argue that the individual members of the Tibetan delegation were coerced. However, the second argument could be applied to this case. Though Ngabo himself had written that he was instructed to consult Dromo before signing any agreement, clearly he did not do so.
- 48 Lha’u rta ra Thub bstan bstan dar 1982: 110–11.
- 49 Shokang Soinam [Sonam] Dargyal. “Escorting the Representative of The Central Government to Tibet” *China’s Tibet*, Spring 1991: 12–14.
- 50 Takla Phuntsog Tashi.
- 51 Nga phod Ngag dbang ’jigs med 1989.
- 52 *Ibid.*
- 53 Interview with Takla Phuntsog Tashi.
- 54 *Tibet: Myth vs. Reality*. Beijing Review Publication (1988): 134.
- 55 *Ibid.*, 135–137. Statement by Bainqen Erdini and Officials of the Bainqen Kambu Liji.
- 56 Dawa Norbu, “Tibetan Response to Chinese Liberation”, *Asian Affairs* 62 (1975): 266.

AGREEMENT ON MEASURES FOR THE PEACEFUL LIBERATION OF TIBET

(The 17-point Agreement of May 23, 1951)

Source: H. E. Richardson, *Tibet and its History*, London/Boston: Shambala, 1984, pp. 290–3. Reprinted by permission of the Tibetan Government-in-exile.

The Tibetan nationality is one of the nationalities with a long history within the boundaries of China and, like many other nationalities, it has done its glorious duty in the course of the creation and development of the great Motherland. But, over the last 100 years or more, imperialist forces penetrated into China and in consequence also penetrated into the Tibetan region and carried out all kinds of deceptions and provocations. Like previous reactionary Governments, the Kuomintang reactionary Government continued to carry out a policy of oppression and sowing dissension among the nationalities, causing division and disunity among the Tibetan people. The local government of Tibet did not oppose the imperialist deception and provocation and adopted an unpatriotic attitude towards the great Motherland. Under such conditions the Tibetan nationality and people were plunged into the depths of enslavement and sufferings. In 1949 basic victory was achieved on a nation-wide scale in the Chinese people's war of liberation; the common domestic enemy of all nationalities—the Kuomintang reactionary Government—was overthrown and the common foreign enemy of all nationalities—the aggressive imperialist forces—was driven out. On this basis the founding of the People's Republic of China (CPR) and of the Chinese People's Government (CPG) was announced.

In accordance with the Common Programme passed by the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference (CPPCC), the CPG declared that all nationalities within the boundaries of the CPR are equal and that they shall establish unity and mutual aid and oppose imperialism and their own public enemies, so that the CPR will become a big family of fraternity and co-operation, composed of all its nationalities. Within the big family of all nationalities of the CPR, national regional autonomy shall be exercised in areas where national minorities are concentrated and all national minorities shall have freedom to develop their spoken and written languages and to preserve or reform their customs, habits and religious beliefs, and the CPG shall assist all national minorities to develop their political, economic, cultural and educational construction work. Since then, all nationalities within the country—with the exception of those in the areas of Tibet and Taiwan—have gained liberation. Under the unified leadership of the CPG and the direct leadership of higher levels of people's

governments, all national minorities have fully enjoyed the right of national equality and have exercised, or are exercising, national regional autonomy.

In order that the influences of aggressive imperialist forces in Tibet might be successfully eliminated, the unification of the territory and sovereignty of the CPR accomplished, and national defence safeguarded; in order that the Tibetan nationality and people might be freed and return to the big family of the CPR to enjoy the same rights of national equality as all other nationalities in the country and develop their political, economic, cultural and educational work, the CPG, when it ordered the People's Liberation Army (PLA) to march into Tibet, notified the local government of Tibet to send delegates to the central authorities to conduct talks for the conclusion of an agreement on measures for the peaceful liberation of Tibet. In the latter part of April 1951 the delegates with full powers of the local government of Tibet arrived in Peking. The CPG appointed representatives with full powers to conduct talks on a friendly basis with the delegates with full powers of the local government of Tibet. As a result of the talks both parties agreed to establish this agreement and ensure that it be carried into effect.

- (1) The Tibetan people shall unite and drive out imperialist aggressive forces from Tibet; the Tibetan people shall return to the big family of the Motherland—the People's Republic of China.
- (2) The local government of Tibet shall actively assist the PLA to enter Tibet and consolidate the national defences.
- (3) In accordance with the policy towards nationalities laid down in the Common Programme of the CPPCC, the Tibetan people have the right of exercising national regional autonomy under the unified leadership of the CPG.
- (4) The central authorities will not alter the existing political system in Tibet. The central authorities also will not alter the established status, functions and powers of the Dalai Lama. Officials of various ranks shall hold office as usual.
- (5) The established status, functions and powers of the Panchen Ngoerhtehni shall be maintained.
- (6) By the established status, functions and powers of the Dalai Lama and of the Panchen Ngoerhtehni are meant the status, functions and powers of the thirteenth Dalai Lama and of the ninth Panchen Ngoerhtehni when they were in friendly and amicable relations with each other.
- (7) The policy of freedom of religious belief laid down in the Common Programme of the CPPCC shall be carried out. The religious beliefs, customs and habits of the Tibetan people shall be respected and lama monasteries shall be protected. The central authorities will not effect a change in the income of the monasteries.
- (8) Tibetan troops shall be reorganised step by step into the PLA and become a part of the national defence forces of the CPR.
- (9) The spoken and written language and school education of the Tibetan nationality shall be developed step by step in accordance with the actual conditions in Tibet.
- (10) Tibetan agriculture, livestock-raising, industry and commerce shall be developed step by step and the people's livelihood shall be improved step by step in accordance with the actual conditions in Tibet.

AGREEMENT ON MEASURES FOR PEACEFUL LIBERATION

- (11) In matters related to various reforms in Tibet, there will be no compulsion on the part of the central authorities. The local government of Tibet should carry out reforms of its own accord, and, when the people raise demands for reform, they shall be settled by means of consultation with the leading personnel of Tibet.
- (12) In so far as former pro-imperialist and pro-Kuomintang officials resolutely sever relations with imperialism and the Kuomintang and do not engage in sabotage or resistance, they may continue to hold office irrespective of their past.
- (13) The PLA entering Tibet shall abide by all the above-mentioned policies and shall also be fair in all buying and selling and shall not arbitrarily take a needle or thread from the people.
- (14) The CPG shall have centralised handling of all external affairs of the area of Tibet; and there will be peaceful co-existence with neighbouring countries and establishment and development of fair commercial and trading relations with them on the basis of equality, mutual benefit and mutual respect for territory and sovereignty.
- (15) In order to ensure the implementation of this agreement, the CPG shall set up a Military and Administrative Committee and a Military Area HQ in Tibet and—apart from the personnel sent there by the CPG—shall absorb as many local Tibetan personnel as possible to take part in the work. Local Tibetan personnel taking part in the Military and Administrative Committee may include patriotic elements from the local government of Tibet, various districts and various principal monasteries; the name-list shall be set forth after consultation between the representatives designated by the CPG and various quarters concerned and shall be submitted to the CPG for appointment.
- (16) Funds needed by the Military and Administrative Committee, the Military Area HQ and the PLA entering Tibet shall be provided by the CPG. The local government of Tibet should assist the PLA in the purchase and transport of food, fodder and other daily necessities.
- (17) This agreement shall come into force immediately after signature and seals are affixed to it.

Signed and sealed by delegates of the CPG with full powers: Chief Delegate—Li Wei-Han (Chairman of the Commission of Nationalities Affairs); Delegates—Chang Ching-wu, Chang Kuo-hua, Sun Chih-yuan. Delegates with full powers of the local government of Tibet: Chief Delegate—Kaloon Ngabou Ngawang Jigme (Ngabo Shape); Delegates—Dzasak Khemey Sonam Wangdi, Khentrung Thupten Tenthar, Khenchung Thupten Lekmuun, Rimski Samposey Tenzin Thundup. Peking, 23rd May, 1951.

THE TIBETAN RESISTANCE MOVEMENT AND THE ROLE OF THE CIA

Jamyang Norbu

Source: R. Barnett and S. Akiner (eds.), *Resistance and Reform in Tibet*, London: Hurst, 1994, pp. 186–96.

In marked contrast to developments in other areas of Tibetan studies, very little attention has been paid to modern Tibetan history, and within that even less to the violent and cataclysmic period in the 1950s and 1960s when the Tibetan people, especially the tribesmen from Eastern and North-eastern Tibet, rose in revolt against Chinese domination. What few published accounts of the Tibetan resistance movement exist are on the whole vague about figures, place-names and details of the people involved. Books like *Tibet in Revolt* by George Patterson, *From the Land of Lost Content* by Noel Barber, *The Cavaliers of Kham* by Michel Peissel and *The Secret War in Tibet* by Lowell Thomas Jr. were good reads, very supportive of the Tibetan cause and probably the best that could be done at the time with the limited information available, but they were on the whole rather nebulous. In one of them the author even managed to make little or no mention of the real leaders and participants in the revolt, while glorifying as resistance heroes and leaders people who were clearly not.

There has also been a singular lack of inquiry into the resistance movement on the part of the exile Tibetan government. This government has always had an uneasy relationship with the resistance. The wide extent and popularity of the resistance highlighted the failure of the government's policy of co-operation with the Chinese occupation forces. Traditional prejudices between Khamba and the Lhasa government also played their part. Early in the 1960s the exile Tibetan government did attempt to gather statements from as many refugees as it could and collected a number of accounts from people involved in the resistance. These accounts were never very extensive or detailed, and only a few of them were ever published.

A number of these records seem to have been lost or misplaced, but an attempt is being made to put them back together as far as possible.

The resistance itself did not go in for documenting its activities in any systematic or extensive way, and was suspicious of other people's attempts to do so. With the establishment of connections with the CIA there was an almost obsessive insistence on secrecy that was carried to a degree where it did more harm than good. No real attempt was made to publicise the activities of the resistance to the world. Even within Tibetan society little attempt was made to inform people of its activities. Secrecy was

also maintained so as not to embarrass the governments of India or Nepal where the resistance maintained bases and agencies.

After the closure of the last guerrilla bases in Mustang in 1974, the Four Rivers, Six Ranges organisation in India, which was mostly composed of former resistance members, made attempts to gather and record detailed histories of every guerrilla group or *dmag-sgar* that had belonged to the resistance movement. This project has apparently had considerable setbacks and it does not seem that it will be possible for these records to be published in the near future. A posthumous biography of the leader of the resistance, Gompo Tashi Andrugtsang, was published in India in 1973, but it was sketchy and badly translated.¹

Lhamo Tsering, a leader of the Mustang guerrilla force and assistant to Gyalo Thondup, one of the Dalai Lama's elder brothers (who was a kind of overall leader of the resistance for some years), has also written his memoirs. The book is not published at the time of writing, but it promises to shed light on some aspects of resistance history, probably focusing on resistance activities in the 1960s and '70s when he was involved in a position of responsibility. Another person closely linked to the Tibetan rebellion, especially in the mid- and late 1950s, is the controversial Alo Chonze. He was one of the leaders of an underground Lhasa-based nationalist organisation, the *Mimang* (the People), which was the main source of anti-Chinese activities in the city. He is publishing, in installments, a semi-historical, semi-autobiographical, account of the Tibetan uprising and of the politics of exile. Two volumes have been released of which the first provides interesting information on the uprising in Lhasa and the formation of the *Mimang* organisation in Lhasa.² Although many resistance leaders and fighters have died, a number are still alive in Nepal, India and Switzerland. Many of them these days seem willing to be interviewed, and to talk freely about their past. In a recent French television documentary on the Tibetan resistance,³ Khambas spoke openly about their activities, their old CIA connections and even their connections with the Indian intelligence and army.

Washington still regards American support for the Tibetan resistance as a sensitive issue, and the appropriate records remain security-classified. A few obscure newspaper articles,⁴ and some references in certain books on the CIA⁵ are all that is available to the public on one of the few long-term and successful operations conducted by the American secret service. According to Fletcher Prouty, a colonel in the US Air Force who managed secret air missions for General Erskine's Office of Special Operations, Tibet is 'buried in the lore of the CIA as one of those successes that are not talked about'.⁶

Such lack of information on the Tibetan Revolt has enabled the Tibetan leadership successfully to rewrite history, playing down the role of the armed revolt and fostering the fiction that the popular resistance was non-violent. Though unhesitatingly subscribed to by many friends of Tibet, this story is patently untrue. There was never a non-violent campaign against the Chinese. Even the few public demonstrations before the uprising of March 10, 1959 were not a display of the public's commitment to non-violence: quite the reverse. They were a signal to the Chinese that the Tibetans were prepared to act violently to protect their leader and their religion.

The promotion of the non-violent interpretation of modern Tibetan history has accorded only a minor role to the resistance movement. It has even given rise to two very misleading assumptions, both of which we shall examine: first, that the overall

scale of the uprisings had not been significant; and secondly, that the resistance movement had been supported and even possibly fomented by the CIA.

Magnitude of the Tibetan uprising

From anecdotal evidence provided by surviving resistance fighters, refugees and recent escapees from Tibet, it would seem that during the uprising the scale of the fighting and the consequent death and dislocation in Eastern Tibet were enormous, and comparable in magnitude to the events in Afghanistan following the Soviet invasion. Though the effect of the uprising on China has not been as great as that of the Afghan conflict on the Russian people, especially since propaganda ensured that the Chinese people would be properly ignorant of it, the uprising has remained the one persistent running sore that has constantly spoiled China's otherwise successful efforts at keeping up appearances before the eyes of the world. Roderick MacFarquhar considered that the Tibetan resistance produced 'the gravest episode of internal disorder [in the People's Republic of China] prior to the Cultural Revolution . . .'⁷

Even if we were to discount the anecdotal evidence, the scale of demographic dislocation in Eastern and North-eastern Tibet, where most of the fighting took place, provides sufficient evidence to substantiate the claim of many refugees as to the massive extent of the fighting and casualties in these areas. One of the standard corroborations of this provided by refugees is that, subsequent to the crushing of the uprisings, all or most of the ploughing in their villages or districts was being done by women (unthinkable in the past) as there were no men left in the area. Chinese figures taken from their 1982 census,⁸ fifteen to twenty years after the revolt had been crushed, indicate a much larger ratio of women to men in Eastern and North-eastern Tibet, even though a lengthy period of time had passed since then. Such disparate sex-ratio figures do not appear at all in other parts of Tibet or even China, although vast numbers of people died in these places too, for other reasons such as the 1960–3 famine (probably the greatest famine in human history), which affected both sexes equally. We must also bear in mind that the majority of the Tibetan people lived in Eastern and North-eastern Tibet where most of the fighting had taken place.

No substantive effort has been made by any person or organisation, not even the exile Tibetan government, to find out the number of people killed in the uprisings in Eastern Tibet, or in the rest of Tibet and Lhasa. In fact the only published figure we have for Tibetans killed in the Lhasa uprising and its aftermath is from official Chinese sources. A booklet marked 'secret' and published in Lhasa on October 1, 1960 by the political department of the Tibetan Military District, says of the aftermath of the Lhasa uprising: 'From last March up to now we have already wiped out [*xiaomie*] over 87,000 of the enemy.'⁹

Earliest resistance to the Chinese

Prevalent at one time among journalists and academics sympathetic to China was the idea that the Tibetan revolt was essentially a conspiracy of the Tibetan church, the aristocracy and the CIA, and that even the Dalai Lama's flight to India was engineered by the CIA.¹⁰ Vestiges of such notions still prevail today. Popular resistance in Eastern and North-eastern Tibet began long before any American involvement.

In fact there is evidence to prove that sporadic resistance to Communist Chinese advances occurred in these areas even as early as 1949. We need not go into accounts here of earlier clashes between Tibetans and Communist forces, especially in 1934–5 during the Long March,¹¹ as these clashes were not connected to the actual invasion and occupation of Tibet in later years.

In a number of interviews I was repeatedly informed by tribesmen from Gyalthang in South-eastern Tibet, now part of Yunnan Province, that they had resisted the Red Army when it first advanced into their territory in 1949. Their claims are to some extent confirmed by the accounts of Peter Goullart,¹² a White Russian employee of the Kuomintang Government, who served in the late 1940s as an agricultural expert of sorts in the Nakhi (Naxi) town of Lijiang in Yunnan Province. Goullart states that in 1949, after the fall of Kunming, the provincial capital, and the Red Army push towards the west, Khambas from Gyalthang, which bordered Nakhi territory, came to Lijiang and, helped by local Nakhis, managed to inflict an initial defeat on an advance guard of the Red Army. Later the Communists used more subtle tactics and infiltrated agents among the younger Nakhis which led to their demoralisation and the fall of Lijiang to the Communists. Goullart also mentions that the Gyalthang were a more warlike and formidable people than the Nakhis.

Gyalthang's resistance probably explains why it was one of the first places in Eastern Tibet where 'democratic reforms' were carried out from as early as 1953. Gompo Tashi Andrugtsang mentions the event in his autobiography: 'In the area of Gyalthang Anthena Kham, the following year [1953] the local population was divided into five strata and a terror campaign of selective arrests launched by the Chinese. People belonging to the first three strata were either publicly humiliated or condemned to the firing squad.'¹³

Another area of early resistance to the Red Army came from somewhere geographically distant to Gyalthang, namely Hormukha and Nangra in Amdo, or North-eastern Tibet. Here, the fight against the Communists had been going on for a considerable time with Ma Pufang, the Kuomintang Governor (in reality a semi-independent Muslim warlord) of Qinghai Province, who led his Hui cavalry, and was allied with Amdowa and Mongol tribesmen.¹⁴ But when Communist victory seemed imminent in 1949, Ma Pufang fled with his wives and treasure on two DC-10s. The Red Army reached Nangra and Hormukha in September 1949, according to an eyewitness, Rinzin,¹⁵ who later also participated in the fighting.

In December of the same year the two chiefs of Nangra, Pon Wangchen and Pon Choje, led their men in battle against the Chinese. There were a number of encounters, in one of which the son of Pon Wangchen was killed. Rinzin claims that the initial contingent of Chinese troops with whom they fought consisted of around 6,000 men, who were later reinforced by an additional 10,000 men from Rikong after the outbreak of fighting. The people of Hormukha joined in the fighting in February 1950, but by then it was too late to affect the outcome of the conflict as the Chinese had many more troops in the area. All the major Amdowa forces were destroyed. In one disastrous encounter Pon Choje was nearly captured but managed to escape attention by faking death. Nearly all the tribesmen were forced to leave their homes and take to the mountains from where they began hit-and-run guerrilla operations against Chinese supply lines and patrols. These operations proved more successful than the pitched battles they had been conducting until then on more conventional

lines. The Amdowas of Nangra claimed that, because of their determined resistance, the Chinese referred to Nangra as 'Little Taiwan'.

In 1952 a truce was arranged by some lamas of Dechen monastery. Pon Wangchen was taken to Xining and then to Beijing where he is said to have met Mao Zedong. There was a brief period of peace between 1952 and 1953, but once again the Chinese began denunciations, struggles, arrests and executions, and renewed fighting broke out all over the territory. The Chinese had by now built up an overwhelming superiority in numbers and in quality of arms, and there was no doubt as to the final outcome of the conflict. Many thousands of Amdowas were killed in the fighting, executed or sent to labour camps. Many also committed suicide. Some escaped to Lhasa. In the words of Rinzin, 'only a few blind men, cripples, fools and some children were left.'¹⁶

Such resistance against invading Chinese forces in the late 1940s and early 1950s was not a common phenomenon in Eastern and North-eastern Tibet at the time. Nor did the Tibetan Government forces receive much help from local Khambas when Communist troops attacked in October 1959. A considerable degree of the Tibetan Government's prestige and authority had waned in Eastern Tibet since 1917 when, under Kalon Lama Champa Tendar, Governor of Eastern Tibet and Commander of the Tibetan forces there, Tibetan power and influence in that entire area had been at its pinnacle.¹⁷ Before the Chinese invasion of 1950 the Tibetan Government had attempted to arouse the people of the frontier regions to resist the Red Army, but without much success. Taktser Rinpoche, one of the Dalai Lama's elder brothers and abbot of Kumbum monastery in Amdo, told me that his monastery had received a letter from the Lhalu *zhabs-pad* (minister), the Governor of Eastern Tibet and Commander of the Tibetan army there a year before the invasion, instructing the monks of Taktser to resist Chinese forces. But Lhalu's efforts to rouse Amdowa and Khamba loyalty were not very successful, except in a few cases, as at the monastery at Chamdo.¹⁸

Isolated though they were, the outbreaks of fighting in Gyalthang, Nangra and Hormukha and certain other areas were of sufficient scale and ferocity to be indicative of the course that events in Eastern Tibet would run. Soon Chinese policies in Eastern Tibet began to create a new wave of hostility against the occupation forces that became particularly violent around the winter of 1955-6, one of the most immediate causes being the implementation by the Chinese of a set of programmes labelled 'Democratic Reforms'. The Chinese called this uprising the 'Kangding Rebellion',¹⁹ after the Chinese name for the town of Dartsedo, which was the Chinese headquarters for the whole of Eastern Tibet. The revolt spread like wildfire all over Eastern Tibet, and soon tribal chiefs from diverse areas tried to organise a joint effort to defeat the Chinese. Yuru Pon, the paramount chieftain of the Lithang nomads, sent messengers all over Eastern Tibet calling for attacks on Chinese positions on the eighteenth day of the first Tibetan month of 1956. Monasteries and tribes in Nyarong, Kanze, Batang, Drango, Linkashiba and many other places responded to this call to action. Yuru Pon later died in the bombed ruins of the Great Monastery of Lithang after having killed two senior Chinese officers with a concealed pistol in a fake surrender.²⁰

Dorje Yudon (Dorgee Eudon), the younger wife of the chieftain of Nyarong, Gyari Nima, stated in an interview²¹ that the Gyaritsang family received a letter from the Lithang chieftain asking them to revolt on the eighteenth day of the first moon of 1956. He also wrote that he would send them another message confirming the date of the revolt as soon as he received answers from all the chiefs in Eastern Tibet. Since

Gyari Nima had been summoned by the Chinese authorities to Dartsedo for a meeting, Dorje Yudon took up the leadership of the Gyaritsang clan and other tribes of Nyarong. When she organised meetings in various parts of Nyarong to persuade people to join her revolt, the Chinese authorities realised what she was up to and attempted to have her assassinated at her home by two Nyarongwa collaborators aided by two Chinese soldiers.

The attempt failed, as did other attempts to arrest Dorje's uncle and other leaders of the revolt in Nyarong. She was therefore forced to call the revolt four days earlier than the date agreed upon with Yuru Pon. The Nyarongwas were initially successful in destroying various small Chinese garrisons in the region and also in killing and capturing many collaborators. Surviving Chinese troops fell back on the Chinese administrative centre for Nyarong which was located in Drugmo Dzong, the Fortress of the Female Dragon. The surviving Chinese soldiers barricaded themselves behind the massive walls of the ancient fort and prepared to hold out. The Nyarongwas tried to storm the place a number of times but were unsuccessful.

The Chinese sent relief forces from Kanze which the rebels tried to intercept and ambush. Initially Dorje Yudon's forces were successful but after a month larger Chinese forces from Drango and Thawu (Dawu) managed to break the rebels' siege of the Fortress of the Female Dragon. Dorje Yudon recalls that twenty-three tribal chieftains in Kham first responded to Yuru Pon's call to revolt, and that they called their loose-knit alliance 'Tensung Dhanglang Magar', or 'The Volunteer Army to Defend Buddhism'.

The character of the revolt

Though there were obvious limits to which military action could be co-ordinated among all the various tribes of Eastern Tibet, the general uprising in 1956 did manage to succeed in clearing the Chinese out of nearly the whole province for a few months. The Red Army soon returned in greater strength and numbers, but that part of the story need not concern us here. Yet it is worth noting that, despite long-standing tribal animosities and differences, a fairly successful attempt was made to unite the efforts of Eastern Tibetans in rebellion against the Chinese. When one considers that this attempt at co-ordination had to cover many hundreds of miles of mountain wilderness, without even basic communication equipment, roads or motorised transport, it is remarkable that such a widespread rebellion should have successfully taken place, more or less around the date agreed upon.

The name that the Khambas gave to their resistance movement, 'the Volunteer Army to Defend Buddhism', reflects what may be called the ideological nature of the uprising, and thus the support it gained all over Eastern Tibet and later in Central Tibet. Dawa Norbu, in an article on the Tibetan Revolt, considered that the Khamba uprising was in defence of Tibetan Buddhist values, and of the political and sacred institutions founded upon such values. 'As long as the Chinese did not tamper with the objectively functioning social system and the value systems still considered sacred by members of that society, as happened in Outer Tibet, there was no revolt, although the unprecedented Chinese presence in the country caused great resentment and anxiety. But the moment the Chinese tried to alter the functioning and sacred social system in Inner Tibet which they considered *de jure* China proper, the revolt began.'²²

This traditional ideology on which the revolt was based gave it sufficient popular appeal to transcend the borders of Eastern Tibet and to ignite passions and violence even in the Tibet Autonomous Region, where the Chinese had caused no disruption in the social system, and where the aristocracy and clergy were being actively courted by the Chinese authorities. Hence many Tibetans have considered the revolt a national one,²³ in the sense that the sentiment of the majority of the Tibetan people was involved. Yet the leaders and members of the resistance movement, mainly composed of Khambas and Amdowas, were too often unable to transcend narrow tribal loyalties for the movement to take on a fully national and dynamic character. The traditional Lhasa-Khamba divide, though bridged on a number of occasions during the revolt, was also never reconciled satisfactorily. The other name of the resistance movement, 'Chushi Gangdrug' – 'Four Rivers, Six Ranges' – an ancient name of Eastern Tibet, underlines the narrower and divided character of the movement.

With the savage suppression of the uprisings in Eastern Tibet and the large-scale movement of refugees to Lhasa, the focus of the resistance shifted to Central Tibet, where, under the leadership of the Lithangwa merchant Gompo Tashi Andrugtsang, the earlier very loose-knit confederacy of guerrilla bands was re-organized, and a single resistance army formally created on 16 June, 1958, in the district of Lhokha just south of Lhasa. Weapons were purchased secretly from India. Dawa Norbu points out that 'the vast majority of the 23 Khamba leaders of the Tibet Revolt were merchants who had made their fortune since the "liberation," as China kept pouring silver coins called *dao-yuan* into Tibet to pay the Tibetan ruling class and road workers. But instead of making more money or running away to India safely with their silver fortunes, Khambas spent the Chinese money for the purchase of arms and ammunition for the revolt.'²⁴

The resistance also received information from sympathetic ministers and officials of the Tibetan Government on the location and content of secret government arsenals. From these they removed substantial quantities of arms and ammunition,²⁵ which enabled the guerrillas to cut off the three strategic highways south of Lhasa and nearly paralyse Chinese army operations in that area.

Limits of American involvement

It is from these tumultuous and far-ranging events that the Tibetan resistance movement takes its origins. It was only after these events and other successes, reports of which reached the ears of the American Government in due course,²⁶ that the United States actually sent assistance to the resistance forces in Tibet, although this aid only began to reach the hands of the fighters in 1958. By all accounts, during the crucial period of the resistance in Eastern Tibet and during its greatest successes, no American arms or assistance of any kind were received by any resistance group.

Accounts of the CIA engineering the Dalai Lama's escape and escorting him²⁷ seem to be mostly the result of creative journalistic imagination. The only agents the CIA had in Lhasa who attempted to make some kind of connection with the Dalai Lama and the Tibetan Government were two Lithangwas, Atha and Lhotse, who had been parachuted near Samye some time before the outbreak of the revolt in Lhasa. Lhotse died a few years ago but Atha is still alive, in New Delhi. He told me that he and his partner secretly managed to see Phala, the Dalai Lama's Lord Chamberlain

(*mgron-gnyer chen-mo*), who with Surkhang *zhabs-pad* was the leader of the nationalist faction in the Tibetan Government, and sympathetic to the resistance. Atha gave Phala a message from the American government asking for an official request from the Tibetan Government for American military aid. Phala told Atha that it was too late and that it would be impossible to trust the entire Cabinet or the Assembly with such a sensitive and potentially compromising message. Phala confirmed this story of his meeting with Atha in a conversation I had with him some years ago before his death. Phala planned and organised the Dalai Lama's escape using Atha and Lhotse with their radio transmitter to keep the Americans informed of developments in the escape plan, and later during the actual escape itself.

The true extent and implications of the Tibetan resistance have never been studied systematically. From the little understanding I have managed to gain through conversations and interviews with people who were involved, I have come to realise that the amount and quality of information on these events are frustratingly inadequate; the far greater mass of historical knowledge and memory floats undiscovered beneath the surface of our indifference and neglect. It is my hope that the present attitude of Tibetan officials, Buddhist followers, Western supporters and intellectuals, who regard the resistance movement as an embarrassment – either because it somehow detracts from the preferred peace-loving image of Tibet as a Shangri-la, or because the resistance committed the sin of taking weapons from the CIA – will change and a more realistic and inquiring attitude take its place.

Notes

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- 2 Alo Chonze (Alo Chos-mdzed), *Bod kyi gnas-lugs bden-dzin sgo-pnye bai lden-mig zhes bya-ba (The key that opens the door of truth to the Tibetan situation)*.
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- 23 Phuntsok Wangyal, 'The Revolt of 1959', *Tibetan Review*, July–August, 1974.
- 24 Dawa Norbu, *op. cit.*
- 25 *Andrugtsang, op. cit.*
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- 27 Mullin, *op. cit.*

FICTITIOUS TIBET

The origin and persistence of Rampaism

*Agehananda Bharati*Source: *The Tibet Society Bulletin* 7 (1974): pp. 1-11.

Let me first of all stake my claim and explain some terms in the title: an apparently unexterminable tradition of sheer fiction taken as holy fact originated in Europe and America slightly before the turn of the century – the brainchild of some fertile writers and orators, a number of core tales about inaccessible Tibetan and Himalayan mystics took shape in contrivedly esoteric writings which gained steady momentum until its culmination in Lama Lobsang Rampa's, alias Mr. Hoskins', fantastically fraudulent output beginning with *The Third Eye* and its sequels. I call this whole phony tradition "Rampaism" after its phony consummator, Rampa-Hoskins, and his all-too-numerous followers in North America and Europe. This depressing crowd of partly well-meaning, totally uninformed, and seemingly uninformable votaries holds something like this as its modal view: that there is, somewhere hidden in the Himalayas (invariably mis-stressed on the penultimate "a"), a powerful, mystical, initiate brotherhood of lamas or similar guru adepts, who not only know all the mysteries of the world and the superworld, who not only incorporate and transcend the teachings of Buddhism, Hinduism, and Christianity, but who also master all the occult arts – they fly through the air at enormous speeds, they run 400 miles at a stretch without break, they appear here and there, and they are arch-and-core advisers to the wise and the great who hide these ultimate links to supreme wisdom and control. In addition, they know all their previous incarnations, and can tell everyone what his incarnations were and are going to be. Geographically, the area where those supergurus reside is nebulously defined as "Tibet," "Himalaya," and it often includes the Ganges and India. This, very briefly, is the somewhat auto-erotic credo of a large, and unfortunately still growing, crowd of wide-eyed believers in the mysterious East, apropos which my colleague Professor Hurvitz at the University of British Columbia sagaciously remarked that "for these people, the East must be mysterious, otherwise life has no meaning." To put this somewhat less succinctly and more technically, the enormous, pervasive alienation of Euro-America from the religious themes of the Western world, matched with the general disgruntlement, with the superciliously religious in the established churches, the surfeit with scientific models which seem to generate war and destruction, and most recently, the proliferating fascination with the exotic for its own sake – about which later in greater detail – all these contribute to the desperate quest

for ideas, rituals, and promises that are different from those of the West, that are distant from the West, and that are easily accessible, without any intellectual effort, without any discursive input.

Let me now present an historical sketch of the increasing ingress of pseudo-Orientalia, and specifically of pseudo-Buddhica and pseudo-Tibetica into Europe and America. During my research into ideological change in the Buddhist clergy in Śrī Lankā in 1971, I marvelled at a painting in a temple in the southernmost part of the island. In a long, subterranean corridor, some two hundred vignettes depicting the phases of the *dharma* from its inception under the Bodhi-tree in Buddhagaya to the foundation of the particular temple, the last one showed a white woman kneeling and bowing down before the image of the Tathāgata and two monks administering *sil* (the five precepts of Theravāda Buddhism) to her; behind her, several white men in tropical hats and western suits, one of them bearded. These, so the monk who showed me around informed me, were Mme. Blavatsky and Colonel Olcott embracing Buddhism. This is historically quite correct. The well-meaning American Colonel Olcott and the Russian-born Mme. Blavatsky, founders of the Theosophical Society did indeed undergo that ceremony of initiation in that shrine in Śrī Lankā. Annie Besant became a convert to Mme. Blavatsky, rather than to Buddhism, about a decade later. Leadbeater and other founding members formed the incipient caucus of the Society which still survives, albeit in highly modified and in a largely reduced form when compared to the initial thrust into the religious ideological world of the early 20th century. Now we must distinguish between the genuine and the spurious elements in the movement as it relates to Buddhism. Annie Besant was no doubt a sincere woman; one of the British Empire's most powerful orators, cofounder of the Indian National Congress, and a fine mind, genuinely annoyed at the inanities perpetrated by and constituted in the missionary scene. Col. Olcott was a genuine person, too, concerned with human affairs, and strongly cognizant of religious options other than those of Christianity. But I think Mme. Blavatsky and Leadbeater were frauds, pure and simple. My definition of a fraud or of a phony does not quite coincide with the usual dictionary meanings of these terms. A phony does not necessarily doubt the theses he or she propounds – in fact, they can be full believers themselves. But what makes them phonies is their basic attitude of refusal of matching their tenets with those of a genuine tradition, and of imitating lifestyles which are alien to them, by doing things that superficially look part of the lifestyle they imitate, or of imitational lifestyles which simply do not exist in any cultural body, except as idiosyncrasies. Leadbeater wrote about the *kundalini*, the secret serpent power, and a *mêlée* of things exoteric and other which he had picked up from Indian sources in early translations. He never learned any of the primary languages – Sanskrit, Pali, Tibetan; neither did Besant, Olcott, and Blavatsky. Leadbeater was an aggressive homosexual, and there is no doubt in my mind that he used his esoteric homiletic to seduce young men – some of them very famous indeed in later days. Now I don't object to homosexuality – I think the Gay Freedom movement is well taken and should succeed. But I do object to utilizing bits of theologica or other religious doctrinal material to support one's own aesthetical and sensuous predilections. Hindu Buddhist Tantric texts do indeed use sexual models and analogues in their esoteric tracts, so it is quite in order if scholars and practitioners use these texts in support of their sexual behavior, because the support is objectively there. But no Tantric text implies any but heterosexual relations in its corpus. The

most recent authentic presentation of the place of sexuality in Tibetan Tantrism should suffice as a document for the rejection of the esoteric innuendos in Leadbeater's writings.¹ H. V. Guenther, of course, is a valid empire of Buddhist Tibetan studies in and by himself, and it may not even be necessary to quote so exalted a source as his prolific writings in order to dismantle the Blavatsky-to-Rampa type fraudulence; a very average familiarity with Buddhism would do the job.

Mme. Blavatsky's *Secret Doctrine*, a multivolume work, is such a melee of horrendous hogwash and of fertile inventions of inane esoterica, that any Buddhist and Tibetan scholar is justified to avoid mentioning it in any context. But it is precisely because serious scholars haven't mentioned this opus that it should be dealt with in a serious publication and in one whose readers are deeply concerned with the true representation of Tibetan lore. In other words, since Blavatsky's work has had signal importance in the genesis and the perpetuation of a widespread, weird, fake, and fakish pseudo-Tibetica and pseudo-Buddhica, and since no Tibetologist or Buddhologist would touch her writings with a long pole (no pun intended, Blavatsky is a Russian name, the Polish spelling would be Blavatski), it behooves an anthropologist who works in the Buddhist and Tibetan field to do this job. I don't think that more than five per cent, if that many, of the readers of Lobsang Rampa-Hoskins' work have ever heard about Blavatsky, but Lobsang Rampa-Hoskins must have read them, cover to cover or in excerpts – his whole work reeks of Blavatskyisms, and of course, he doesn't quote sources – fakes never do. Long before Rampa, the whole range of quasi-mathematical spheres, diagrammatic arrangements, levels of existence of consciousness, master- and discipleship, hoisted on a style of self-indulgent, self-aggrandizing rhetoric, was more or less created by Blavatsky. Medieval Christian writers, the Hermetics and a large number of kindred thinkers and their products had indeed presented a wide vista of quasi-mathematical, impressionistic, imaginary structures; earlier, of course, Jewish mysticism with kabbalistic, Talmudic, and earlier medieval Rabbinical moorings might have set the example for the medieval Christian writings of this kind, unless the Christian writers were – or were also – inspired by whatever filtered through to them from the Greek and Hellenic esotericists, the Pythagoreans and a large number of neo-Pythagorean writings spread through the Hellenic world. Medieval Christian scholars did not read Greek, and whatever they did know about those esoteric systems they obtained through Latin translations. Nobody knows to what degree Blavatsky was familiar with any of this. As an anthropologist, I believe in the perennial possibility of independent invention – people get similar ideas without necessary mutual communication or diffusion. Be that as it may, Blavatsky's *Secret Doctrine* and all the subsequent writings of the Esoteric section of the Theosophical Society, later on rechristened "Eastern" to forestall criticisms of mystery-mongering and the pervasive tendency to identify the esoteric with the erotic, rested heavily on such quasi-structural schemes.

I do not doubt that in her earlier years, Blavatsky must have been a highly eclectic, voracious reader. But as with all nonscholars in the field of religious systems, she did not unmix the genuine from the phony; she obviously regarded all sources as equally valid. Not knowing any of the primary languages of the Buddhist-Hindu tradition, she had to rely on whatever had been translated. And, as an epiphenomenon to the awakening interest in oriental studies, a large number of unscholarly writing emerged, produced by people who thought, or pretended, that they could get at the meat of the

newly discovered wisdom of the East by speculating about it in their own way rather than by being guided by its sources, or by seeking guidance from authentic teachers in those eastern lands.

Blavatsky, Besant, and the other founders of the Theosophical movement were of course familiar with other translations then available. The *I Ching* had just about then been translated into French for the first time, though Richard Wilhelm's classical translation into English was published after the *Secret Doctrine*. This whole quasi-mathematical, highly self-indulgent speculation, of course, was part of the emotional packet of the Renaissance and the late Middle Ages in general. There is no doubt that esotericism was, always is, a reaction against the official ecclesiastical hierarchy and against the official doctrines. In India and Tibet, esotericization never took to this kind of pseudo-geometrical-mathematical model, since those models were already part of the official, scholarly traditions available. In these two countries, esotericization used what I call psycho-experimental models, including the erotic, as instruments of opposition and criticism of the official religious establishments. It is quite obvious that Mme. Blavatsky very much identified with this European tradition of opposing the occidental religious belief system by esoteric, i.e. quasi-mathematical, pseudo-scientific speculations and by writings that encompassed diagrammatic representations of a secret universe. The *Secret Doctrine* and much of the older "Esoteric" (later "Eastern") sections of the Theosophical Society generated a welter of phantasmagoria of a spherical, cyclical, graphic overlay type; the vague acquaintance with *mandala* paintings in India added zest to these creations.

I am just not sure whether Mme. Blavatsky read the serious Hindu and Buddhist literature in translation and commentary available in her days, particularly the *Sacred Books of the East* created by Max Mueller in the 80's of the last century. If she did, little of it showed in her writings. One of the most annoying features in the "M Letters" (M for Master) is her use of semi-fictitious names. Like "H Master K" (Koot Humi). There is, of course, no such name in an Indian language or in Tibetan. But in the Upanisads, there is a minor rishi mentioned, by the obviously non-Indo-European name Kuthumi. Just where she picked it up I don't know, but I suspect she might have seen R. E. Hume's *Twelve Principal Upanisads*, which was first published by Oxford University Press in the late 80's of the 19th century. The silly spelling "Koot Hoomi" was probably due to the occidental mystery peddlers' desire to make words sound more interesting by splitting them into a quasi-Chinese series of letters. The Master Letters signed "K" are quite clearly Blavatsky's own invention; no Indian or Tibetan recluse talks or writes like the European feuilleton writer of the early 20th century. In a passage, "K" (for Koot Hoomi) criticizes a writer for saying that "the sacred man wants the gods to be properly worshipped, a healthy life lived, and women loved." "K" comments "the sacred person wants no such thing, unless he is a Frenchman." The inane stupidity that must have gone into the early converts actually believing that an Indian or Tibetan guru would use these European stereo-gibes, is puzzling. Yet again *mundus vult decipi*, and if the average Western alien feels she or he can get the esoteric goods, she or he tends to lower the level of skepticism to a virtual zero.

The works of Swami Vivekananda appeared at about the same time as the *Secret Doctrine*. Vivekananda knew of, and heartily detested, the esotericism of the Theosophical Society; he pronounced his disdain at the Parliament of Religions in Chicago in 1892 – at which convention the Theosophists were well represented. But while the

followers of the Ramakrishna Vivekananda movements as well as the followers of most other neo-Hindu and neo-Buddhist movements officially decried the esoteric, they and other groups marginal to them either blurred that relatively parochial rejection of the esoteric, or, much more commonly, they blended both the esoteric of the Blavatsky type and the Hindu-Buddhist reformist of the Vivekananda-Anagarika Dharmapala types into the kind of broth which is now solidly ensconced in the wisdom-seeking kitchens of the Western world.

Let me now proceed to the arch-paradigm of esoteric phoniness of the latter days. In the mid-fifties, Messrs. Secker & Warburg, a perfectly respectable publishing firm in Britain, sent me a manuscript for evaluation. The author's name was Lama Lobsang Rampa, the title *The Third Eye*. I was suspicious before I opened the wrapper: the "third eye" smacked of Blavatskyan and post-Blavatskyan hogwash. The first two pages convinced me the writer was not a Tibetan, the next ten that he had never been either in Tibet or India, and that he knew absolutely nothing about Buddhism of any form, Tibetan or other. The cat was out of the bag very soon, when the "Lama," reflecting on some cataclysmic situation in his invented past, mused "for we know there is a God." A Buddhist makes many statements of a puzzling order at times, and he may utter many contradictions; but this statement he will not make, unless perhaps – I am trying hard to find a possible exception – he is a nominal Nisei Buddhist in Seattle, Washington, who somehow gets into Sunday school at age eleven and doesn't really know what he is talking about. Even if we apply a very lenient scholarly defense for the statement "there are gods (*lha*) in Tibetan and North Indian Buddhism; by courtesy, the numerous Buddhas and Bodhisattvas of the highly diffuse Buddhist pantheon could be, and sometimes are, referred to as gods" – the statement "there is a God" is and remains impossible for any Buddhist. The *lha* (*deva*) are gods because the European language translations of *deus* in Christian usage do not distinguish between God and gods on the lexical level. The capital "G" is a very late attempt to remedy this, since there were only capital letters in Roman script at the time the Christian theological notions were conceptualized and codified. There may be thousands of gods, then, in Buddhism, but there certainly is no God. The ontological and the affective status of the Buddha in Śrīlankā Buddhism, and *mutatis mutandis*, in other Buddhist areas, has recently bothered a very fine British scholar.² I concur with his results: though the Buddha is indeed worshipped like a god in many ways, he is not seen as a god, or as God. The semantic entailment of "God" is that of creatorhood, control, power, etc., which the Buddha obviously cannot have, since he has passed into *mahanirvana* and is hence extinct: in fact, only Buddhas are extinct – men, gods, demons, etc., are in *samsara*, they, or some of them, have power, up to the power of creation like Brahma the Hindu demiurge, or the Judaco-Christian God.

But this was only one of the inane impossibilities of *The Third Eye*. Every page bespeaks the utter ignorance of the author of anything that has to do with Buddhism as practiced and Buddhism as a belief system in Tibet or elsewhere. But the book also shows a shrewd intuition into what millions of people want to hear. Monks and neophytes flying through the mysterious breeze on enormous kites; golden images in hidden cells, representing earlier incarnations of the man who views them; arcane surgery in the skull to open up the eye of wisdom; tales about the dangers of mystical training and initiation – in a Western world desperately seeking for the mysterious where everything is so terribly accessible to inspection, where the divine has been

bowdlerized or institutionalized, where it speaks with the wagging-finger lingo of moralistic nagging, the less hardy and the softer will seek that which is the opposite of all these turn-off factors. In its extremes, this desperate quest for the impossible and the nonexistent is pathetic; at a seance of the Aquarian Foundation in Seattle, Washington a few years ago, the “leader” read from tablets presented to him blindfolded. During the coffee break, all but a little old lady had left the church hall. The reverend didn’t notice her and began to pack and unpack equipment in a box hidden under the table draped with a cloth. The woman came up to him and said, “Reverend K., I have seen it – but I won’t tell.” I think this episode exemplifies that tragical quest for consolation even if its instrument is fraudulent.

I do not know how many of the readers of *The Third Eye* and the books that followed it, by the same author, actually believe in these cretinistic confabulations. But this is beside the point – for even if a reader tells us that he or she does not really believe in these things but that they serve as an inspiration, consolation, edification, and what not, this does not reduce the tragedy of the situation; far from it, it enhances the pathetic quality of the whole set. We cannot take our emotional cues from things, events, and persons whose nonexistence we know. Taking instruction from parables is a different thing, it is morally and intellectually admissible. But the tales contained in *The Third Eye* do not even qualify as parables, since no moral qualities attach to mystical surgery and kite-flying and the whole lot of events the author has generated in his comic strip. We cannot admit the aesthetical argument either: the operation to open the third eye, the mystical apparitions, etc., may not be true or morally important, but they are pleasant to contemplate. If this were the only reason why people read *The Third Eye*, we could dismiss it with a shrug. But it isn’t; for even where the aesthetic quality of these stories is praised, it is done with a view to obtaining esoteric knowledge – and esoteric knowledge cannot be had from esoteric lies.

Within about half a year from the time I read the manuscript, and reported to the publishers that the book is a fraud and should not be published, Messrs. Seeker & Warburg evidently also asked other Tibetologists and people who know the subject matter, among them Hugh Richardson, the last British and the last Indian Government Resident in Lhasa; Marco Pallis, the British scholar-traveller; and Heinrich Harrer of *Seven Years in Tibet* fame, whom Mr. Richardson had once put under arrest in Lhasa. All of these people concurred, and gave the publishers independent, identical reports: the book is a fraud, the man is a fake. However, publishers are not harbingers of authenticity, but businessmen. They published the book in spite of the negative reports, anticipating its sales potential. And they were right. I understand that six British editions sold close to eighty thousand copies. The German translation, wouldn’t you know it, sold close to a hundred thousand, and comparable numbers of copies were sold in other European languages.

Mr. Richardson and some other irate scholars then took the initiative into their own hands, to trace and subdue the writer. It didn’t take long: the Tibetan Lama turned out to be Mr. Hoskins, an Irish ex-plumber, who sat it out in various libraries in London, reading science fiction, pseudo-orientalia including, no doubt, Blavatsky, and concocting this amazing book. These findings were published in the British press, and booksellers were warned about the matter, so as not to be involved in fraud. E. J. Brill, the famous oriental publishing house and book agent in Leiden, Netherlands, circumvented the issue by advertising the book and adding a note in small print,

indicating that the book was no genuine study of Buddhism or Tibet, but that it was interesting for the experiences it conveyed.

Now one would have thought that the disclosures about Rampa-Hoskins and Lhasa-Hyde Park might impede, if not stop, the production. Far from it. Most of the millions who kept buying the book and its follow-ups did not know about the facts – they simply hadn't read the statements in the British press. Quite a few, however, did read or hear about these disclosures, and remained followers, no less ardent, of the Lama; to wit, two Canadians who called me long distance from Toronto one night, saying: "Sir, you are a wicked person. You say Lama Lobsang is an Irish plumber; well, he may be in the body of an Irish plumber, but the soul of a Tibetan Lama lives in him." "Well, then I can't win," I admitted, and they hung up. Reactions to this incredible situation are variegated and, to the cultural anthropologist concerned with ideological change, highly fascinating; and they are far more complex than the Canadians' effusions. Less than a year ago – over a decade after the publication of *The Third Eye*, a colleague of mine, a historian with perfectly respectable academic credentials, visited and told me about the wisdom of Rampa, with glowing eyes. When I told him the facts in straight, brief words, he was visibly shaken, but said something like: okay maybe the man is not Tibetan, but he grasps the truths of Buddhism. He does nothing of the sort, I said and proved – but I did not convince the man. He (that historian friend of mine) had gone into Raulfing, Macrodiar, Yin and Yang, Hatha Yoga, and half a dozen of other things eminently available in America. To him, the question of genuineness or spuriousness did not pose any problem, and I have a strong hunch that this blurring of the possible distinctness between the genuine and the spurious is very much part of the total pattern of eclectic attraction to the esoteric.

Hoskins moved to Toronto and founded an ashram-like place with a medium-large following up to date. This is in the way of things on the lunatic fringe: but astoundingly, he wrote sequels, of at least three more books after the exposure of *The Third Eye*, starting with *Doctor in Chungking*. All of these have been out in paperback for years, and they are visible on all sorts of shelves – bookstores of course, drugstores, airports, even Greyhound bus stations. Since publishers are no charitable organizations, this means that the books sell, in great numbers. Saying what I say about Lobsang Rampa, and *mutatis mutandis* about most other pseud-Asian cults in the Western world, I have, of course, made many more enemies than friends. People simply cannot stand the idea that there is no abominable snowman, that there is no white brotherhood somewhere in the Himalayas, and that people do not fly through the air except in planes; least of all can they suffer the idea that religious specialists in Tibet are scholars, tough theologians, and down-to-earth monastic leaders, with lots of hard political-know-how, and with the measure of cruelty and strategy that seems to be common to all ecclesiastic leaders who also have secular powers; and this, of course, was very much the case in Tibet before the Chinese take-over.

But matters go deeper than that. We have to investigate the extreme dislike of hard theological, scriptural, commentatorial argument, a dislike that characterizes all followers of the neo-Hindu-Buddhist, and the pseudo-Asian movements of a millennial type. In the first place, anti-scholasticism is one of the hall marks of millenarian movements at any time. Since Tibetan Buddhism is something very different from millenarianism, I do not discount the possibility that the more highly esoteric churches like the Nyingmapa, Karmapa, and minor groups might have been classifiable as

millennarian at the time of their inception, not on the top echelon of their scholarly leadership, but more probably in its populist parameters. But for the last hundred years or more, Tibetan Buddhism, even in its most highly esoteric forms as in the Nyingma, has been very much an ecclesiastical, establishmentarian affair. The Fifth Dalai Lama might have been a maverick in his days, but he is now certainly as canonical as the milder and more domestic figures of Tibetan hagiography. By the same token, many if not most of the religious founder figures in the world were marginal to their coreligionists, on the fringe, rejected by the then establishment. But the process of ascent, plateau formation, and descent as virtually certain consecutive phases in the development of any religious movement, millennial or other, has been studied by anthropologists during the past decade.³

At this time, there are roughly three hundred institutions in North America which claim a Hindu or Buddhist or, to a lesser extent, a Taoist background. Numerically, the Buddhist reference prevails; this is natural, since it includes Indian, Chinese, Japanese, and Tibetan sources, or alleged sources. The guru business is good business, and this has been shown in some recent writings.⁴ But this does not detract from the fact that Buddhism, Hinduism, and the other genuine traditions of the East are misrepresented, and that an image of Tibet is created, and perpetuated, which cannot but be harmful to the future interface between Tibetan culture and the West. It is to these misrepresentations which I now turn, in my concluding assessment.

The first and foremost problem, oddly enough, has a very simple answer. How can the millions of intellectually inert, but good-willed seekers after the mysterious East be informed about the actual traditions of Buddhism, about the actual Tibet? The answer is that the reading agents – libraries, booksellers, and publishers – have to put in some additional effort to market authentic works on these topics, along with the Rampaesque trash. Until a decade ago, good works on these topics were indeed available only to scholars, published by not too handy publishers, and in expensive editions with small circulation. But this is no longer so. A basic library, in English, of works on Tibetan and other Buddhism is now available in any bookstore, and with no greater quest than the works of Rampa and other pseudomystics and gurus. Helmut Hoffmann's *Religions of Tibet*, E. Conze's paperback introductions to Buddhism, and for the more motivated, some of the works of Herbert V. Guenther, David L. Snellgrove, and perhaps my own *Tantric Tradition* (an Anchor-Doubleday paperback, if I may blow my own trumpet at this opportune moment), are items that can be had for the asking, quite literally. Now some might charge that mine is a naive assumption: that readers at large will choose good books over, inauthentic but interesting books in the quest of truth. But I do not think matters are that simple, and the common reading public is perhaps less dumb than meets the eye. I would think that the initial reading of phony, interesting stuff (Autobiography of a Yogi, Lobsang Rampa, Castaneda, etc.) prompts most readers to continue with something more authentic in the same line, if what is more authentic is equally available. It now is, as I pointed out, but it is not known to most that this is the case. It has to be, and can be, made known by the book and publishing trade.

Secondly, and perhaps much more importantly, there are now in North America at least two, possibly more, authentic Tibetan Buddhist centers, viz. Chogyam Trungpa Rinpoche's Karma Dzong in Boulder, Colorado, and his Tail of the Tiger in Barnet, Vt.; and Lama Tarthang's Nyingma center at Berkeley, California. In Britain, there

are another two, and I understand something of the kind has recently been created in Switzerland, possibly by the Tibetan refugee settlers in that country. Now what the inmates of the Tail of the Tiger, etc., do is authentic – it is tedious, serious, yet perfectly positive Buddhist meditation, and a certain amount of basic Buddhist learning, probably not less than for the lower clergy in Tibetan monasteries before the Chinese invasion. Tarthang in Berkeley even teaches Tibetan language and literature to his students. Now here is the main argument for the augmentation of these centers and institutional sequels: since literally thousands of Americans, mostly young, keep thronging to spiritual, mystical, quasi-Eastern centers of meditation, and since they do not know the difference between the genuine and the spurious, why not generate more of those genuine centers with a better apparatus of spread, diffusion, and propaganda? An analogy, which I found in a totally different context a long while ago, immediately comes to my mind: during the beginning of the hippie counter-culture, Ravi Shankar and Ali Akbar Khan, two of India's best classical musicians, became very popular – marijuana and LSD, unbeknown to these masters of the string, helped the sales of their LP's in this country [the USA], for the sitar and the sarod sound magnificent under these drugs even if you know nothing whatever about the music. Then about three years ago, under the spell of the pathological artistic eclecticism of the rock era, some Indian film music also became available in American record stores. Now to the buying public, the wide-eyed rock lovers and the denizens of the counter-culture under thirty, the content of these records makes no difference at all, and the time has come, unfortunately, when you hear less and less Ravi Shankar and more and more Lata Mangeshkar (the Hindu Doris Day, so to speak) at rock and hash sessions all over the country. But this didn't have to be so. Everything Indian was welcome, equally welcome, so if the rubbish could have been screened out, the genuine stuff could have remained intact. Similarly, since the wide-eyed, sickening, gullible public cannot distinguish between phony outfits along the Coast and in New York or elsewhere, and genuine institutions like Tail of the Tiger, etc., why not channel it to the genuine? For this to happen, the genuine has to be more accessible, better known, and of course, better organized. The main reason for the 15-year-old 19-year-old (the latter being his real age, the former his official age) guru from India, for Maharishi Mahesh Yogi and Transcendental Meditation, for Prabhupada Bhaktivedanta and his hopping IKSCON Hare Krishna jokers being so popular and well known is precisely that they have better P.R. services. I think this could be done for the few genuine Tibetan (and other Buddhist) organizations as well.

In summary, then, the answer lies in the enhancement and certification of genuine, and genuinely available, Tibetan Buddhist institutions in this country and in other parts of the Western world, and in the undermining of the phony, in a systematic fashion. The phony can be undermined only by pointing out the genuine and by comparing them with each other. I do not think that the dry orientalist scholars can do that, since the hungry public detests them, ranking them with the worst part of the establishment. But I think that the few lamas in this country who do know English can and must do that. Once the process has been set going, more learned and competent guides can be invited from the expatriate religious community in India. To get the true lama and his skills in, Lobsang must get out. He may still be a good plumber, and that is a lucrative, honest job. Or, if he has learned some powers since he abandoned his tools, he could of course rightly set himself up as a curer, or even a teacher of

meditation if it helps – but not Tibetan meditation. I never saw why Don Juan must be a Yaqui (which he is not) to teach something important, nor why a Hoskins must be Tibetan (which he is not) if he has something important to teach.

Notes

- 1 H. V. Guenther, *The Tantric View of Life*. Los Angeles: Shambala Press, 1972.
- 2 R. F. Gombrich, *Precept and Practice: Traditional Buddhism in the Rural Highlands of Ceylon*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1971. Especially Chapter 3, “The Buddha.”
- 3 A. F. Wallace, “Revitalization Movements,” in *American Anthropologist* 58, (1956), 264–81; A. Bharati, “Anthropological Approaches to the Study of Religion, Ritual, and Belief Systems,” in *Biennial Review of Anthropology*, ed. B. J. Siegel, Stanford University Press, 1972, 230–283.
- 4 Khushwant Singh, “The Guru Business,” in *New York Sunday Times Magazine*, April 30, 1973; A. Bharati, “Hindus Ignorant of Hinduism and Phony Swamis Abroad,” in *Illustrated Weekly of India*, Bombay, March 18, 1973.

[Editor’s note: for an alternate academic perspective on “Lobsang Rampa”, see D. S. Lopez, Jr, *Prisoners of Shangri-La: Tibetan Buddhism and the West*, Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1998, pp. 86–113. Lopez discusses “Lobsang Rampa” in the context of authenticity and authority.]

THE TIBETAN SELF-IMAGE

Robert B. Ekvall

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Recent conversations with Mr. Norbu, the eldest brother of the Dalai Lama, have suggested that the Tibetans, for the first time (or with a new insistence), are asking themselves “What does it mean to be a Tibetan?”. In other words, by what criteria do they identify themselves as different from the Chinese, and how do those differences constitute a distinctive whole, which they want to preserve against the change which the Chinese now seek to impose upon them? For the first time in the nine years I have known him, Mr. Norbu, on his own initiative, discussed the meaning of the word “culture” – using both English and Chinese words as terms of reference – and after much argument proposed a new compound Tibetan word to express the concept.* In the discussion he referred to much he had heard from the Dalai Lama when the latter visited India in 1956 and to reports concerning conditions in all parts of Tibet as told by the Tibetan leaders who in recent years had come to Lhasa, ostensibly on pilgrimage but actually seeking advice and some sort of decision about the future of the Tibetan people.

It is clear that they realize how relatively unstable the national entity of Tibet has been and the degree to which the fragmented political structure contributed to, or at least invited part of, the disaster which has come upon them. But at the same time they feel that the Tibetan way of life – Tibetan culture as they newly recognize the concept – is something coherent and distinctive for which they are willing to struggle and risk much in a very unequal conflict.

As befits a people with a rich and distinctive culture, they have always had a strong cultural awareness, the expression of which is to be found in recorded Tibetan history and also in the folkloric answers which Tibetans give when asked what makes them one with their fellows, how they recognize their fellows and why are they different from other people? For years I asked questions such as these and here record in brief the sum of the answers which depict in considerable detail the Tibetan self-image.

Tibetan cultural self-consciousness focuses on the concept of oneness with regard to a number of attributes or aspects. It is a sense of oneness that gives assurance of belonging, provides guidance for mutual recognitions, and differentiates and excludes those who do not belong. With reference to a number of criteria the Tibetan affirms this “oneness” with the other persons who recognize validity of the same criteria. So doing, he calls them Tibetans and all others non-Tibetans.

Listed in the order of their importance, as the Tibetans state and rate them, these criteria are: (1) Religion. *CHos Lugs gCig* (religion manner one); (2) Folkways: *KHa*

Lugs gCig (mouth or part manner one); (3) Language: *sKad Lugs gCig* (speech manner one); (4) Race. *Mi Rigs gCig* (human lineage one); (5) Land. *Sa CHa gcig* (soil extent one). In both importance and sharpness of definition these five criteria are not equal. The first (religion) is the dominant one; the last two, (race and land) are admittedly of lesser importance.

The Tibetan word *CHos* has a much greater range of meaning than the English word religion. By definition and usage *CHos* is: (1) as stated in the Charter of the Namgyal Institute of Tibetology in Sikkim, the religion of Tibet and all the related arts, literature, and science, and it may be taken as the convenient equivalent of Tibetology in its entire scope;¹ (2) religion as a general term applicable to all religions; (3) the Buddhist religion as distinguished from the Bon religion; (4) the second entity of the jewel Triad, commonly translated as "law;" (5) any and all formulae or religious discourse – this includes not only all prayers but tantric and religious literature in its entirety; and (6) any writing on any scrap of paper, which (because it is written) is assumed to be related to (5) above. This list of meanings is representative rather than exhaustive; as used in the phrase *CHos Lugs gCig* (religion manner one), the word comprehends the meanings (1) through (5) above.

This wide inclusiveness is symptomatic of the dominance of religion in Tibetan life. It operates on many levels. In ethics it sets up compassion and the creation of merit as the ultimate ideal governing motivation, and enunciates the positive moral virtues and the complementary prohibitions against anti-social behavior. It conditions the Tibetan's intellectual life, for it supplies him with an elaborate theory of existence (whether that of phenomena or that of pneuma) and furnishes him with the principles (and more than ample illustration and practice) of logic, oratory, and composition. A framework and theory of history, past, present and future, is also provided. Possession of a system of writing is associated with and traditionally ascribed to, the introduction of religion; and all literature is either primarily religious or hallowed by close association with religion. The sciences (medicine, astronomy, mathematics, etc.) as he knows them are similarly under the wing of religion. Drama and dance are chiefly religious – as exemplified by the great spectacles and miracle plays that mark the special occasions of a calendar which has been appropriated by religion. Seasonal folk celebrations of the winter and summer solstices, and sowing, and harvesting, have been supplanted by rituals honoring Buddhist saints and Bodhisattvas.

The monastery shares the Tibetan architectural skyline with the fort or wall of a military past, and with the castle or palace of official or princeling, but it far outranks either in present significance as the seat of power, or as the landmark of a centripetal force that draws the scattered people of the steppe and mountains to centers where they meet, trade, and renew a consciousness of being one. The religious hierarchy, either by the placing of religious personnel in the key posts of the government structure, or by the overwhelming force of pervasive indirect pressure on such scattered or residual secular power structures as still exist, maintains preponderance of control. The most cohesive, wealthy and influential of the three main sub-cultures in the Tibetan social structure is a religious one and has a membership of at least one sixth of the total population.

To this dominance of religion in all fields of thought and endeavor, and to its demands, the Tibetans subjectively respond with faith and a continuing allegiance and support, expressed in observances and ritual which take time, effort, and substance.

From almost every family one member is consecrated to the service of, and participation in, the distinctive Tibetan sub-culture – the monastic community. Religion is the great all-comprehensive fact of his life, and in that context the Tibetan is entirely logical when he bases his self-image of what constitutes a Tibetan, on *CHos Lugs gCig* (religion manner one).

This statement, however, requires some qualification, for there are individuals who, by extreme native scepticism – the intransigence of the true rebel – or because of conversion to other beliefs, are no longer *Nang Ba* (within one[s]). Such persons and the members of certain communities on both the extreme western and northeastern borders of Tibet who have become Muslims, are no longer recognized by the Tibetans as being unequivocally Tibetan. Then there is the matter of the adherents of the Bon religion, still found in some numbers in certain localities. This, however, poses no real problem in Tibetan thinking. The Bon religion, historically the antagonist of Buddhism, has been so inter-penetrated by Buddhism, its teachings so re-stated in Buddhist terms and its ritual and organization have become so close and so slavish a copy of Buddhist ritual and organization that the Bon Po – even the longhaired wizards – are accepted, in a strange and somewhat illogical way, as being Tibetan in religion. As the original demons of Tibet, after being defeated by Padma Sambhava, were re-commissioned and given a new existence as “defenders of religion,” so the Bon religion has achieved a tacitly accorded status as a form of Tibetan religion, and its followers, though illegitimate, are yet members of the family.

The Tibetan word *KHa* (mouth or part) found in the phrase *KHa Lugs gCig* (mouth or part manner one) would seem at first to refer to linguistic unity. It sometimes is used in that sense – *KHa* standing for the faculty or habit of speech. But as a criterion, in the context of the phrase quoted above, it has primary reference to eating habits and avoidances and a somewhat extended reference to general behavior patterns. Two factors, often mentioned by Tibetans, unquestionably contribute to making eating habits – or avoidances – important, and representative of folkways in the aggregate. The Tibetans ascribe great importance, and a significance that is determinative in an entire range of inter-personal relationships to the matter of eating together – partaking of the same food without hesitation and discrimination. This is so well known that when the Chinese Communist authorities were attempting to woo Tibetan favor and approbation, the Chinese soldiers were ordered never to refuse a Tibetan invitation to eat or drink. In sharp contrast to this pattern of behavior and its extended significance, the Tibetans are in contact with communities where there are strong and ungracious taboos concerning eating. The Islamic prohibitions and caste regulations among Muslims and Hindus on many borders of Tibet prevent this participation in good fellowship and acceptance of hospitality. Such people – their nearest neighbors – are *KHa KHa KHa Red* (mouth part part is) and separate from them.

With the secondary meaning of “part,” the word *KHa* also appears in a very ancient and comprehensive, and still widely used, term for Tibetans² – *Bod KHa Pa* (Tibetan part one[s]). In modern usage this refers to all Tibetans whether or not they are under the political control of the Lhasa government. *Bod Pa* (Tibetan one[s]) on the other hand is a term generally restricted to those who are politically under the control of the *sDe Pa gZHung* (the central district) or government of which the Dalai Lama is the political head. Thus all Tibetans (*Bod KHa Pa*) revere the Dalai Lama as their religious head, and indeed the supreme religious symbol, but only the *Bod Pa*

also acknowledge his political control. Thus in its double and variable sense of mouth and part, *KHa* becomes a folkloric term for culture or folkways – and important as a criterion of oneness.

The language which the Tibetans list as the third of the criteria of unity is one of which they may well be proud. Though unaware that scientists regard speech as of very great importance in establishing group and community feeling and self-identification of a people, he nevertheless makes the same evaluation. The Tibetan language as living speech is rich, flexible and by its phonetic qualities (lack of fixed tone for meaning or fixed syllabic stress) remarkably suited to oratory and narrative – both in verse and prose. In its literary or classical form it survived the massive impact of Sanskrit grammatical and syntactical influence and resisted almost completely any injection of loan words and “the easy way out” of transliteration. Instead, the Tibetan scholars, of the seventh and eighth centuries, from the resources of their own language – that of a pre-literate and somewhat rude culture – created Tibetan terms for all the abstruse concepts of Buddhism. Even the Chinese language accepted a greater number of loan words (badly transliterated) than did Tibetan. Either the Tibetan “translators” of that time were extremely sophisticated linguistically, or the Tibetan language is innately remarkably resistant to penetration. As one of my colleagues remarked,³ when somewhat ruefully comparing it with Japanese, “At least a very inhospitable language.”

Within known times and in specific instances Tibetan has supplanted other languages. Reference to the ZHang ZHung language of some area in southwestern Tibet is found in Tibetan records, but no such language exists today, and the people of this area now speak Tibetan. There are two districts in eastern and northeastern Tibet called *Hor* (Turkic or Mongol) but the *Hor Pa* (Hor one[s]) of the present day speak Tibetan as do *Sog Po* (Mongols) in Amdo, south of the Yellow River, who call themselves Mongol and live in Mongolian-style tents but speak Tibetan, although some individuals still speak some Mongolian. What became of the Chiang tribes who were incorporated into the Tibetan empire in the seventh and eighth centuries is not known; the Chiang people in western China speak their own language, which may be related to both Burmese and Tibetan, but it certainly is not Tibetan, and there are no people speaking the Chiang language among the Tibetans.

The Tibetan language also has not broken down into mutually unintelligible dialects. Considering the great distances, the topography and difficulty of movement and communication – factors which usually favor dialectal variation – the Tibetans are linguistically markedly homogeneous. The more conservative or archaic dialects of the extreme west and east are very similar and the language of Central Tibet, which has undergone the greatest amount of change from what may be assumed to have been the ancient form, is yet understood by all. Despite some very aberrant forms in certain valleys of southeastern Tibet, general intelligibility is maintained. Dialectal variation in modern spoken Tibetan is, in my experience, less than dialectal variation in Chinese mandarin. Some difficulty of understanding there is, but not as much as between a peasant of Hunan or Kwangsi and one from north China, who yet speak the same language.

A 13th-century Tibetan statesman, reporting the result of his negotiations with the Mongols on behalf of the Tibetan people, said that what was done “May be to the advantage of the Tibetan-speaking populations”.⁴ In the 20th century the Sikkim

Institute of Tibetology states its aim to serve "Tibetan-speaking countries and non-Tibetan-speaking countries."⁵ Theoretically and empirically the Tibetan is thus well justified in citing his language – one of unusual interest to scholars – as one of the more important criteria on which to base his sense of oneness.

In the phrase *Mi Rigs gCig* (human lineage one) the Tibetan states his belief that the Tibetan people have a single line of descent of autochthonous origin. This is elaborated in the legend of how the Himalayan ape mated with a female demon of the crags and spawned a numerous progeny; later, in a compassion which stemmed from his Bodhisattvaship, he returned and gave them grain to eat and plant; after that their tails fell off, they came down from the trees and became the Tibetan race.

The legend is of interest for a number of reasons. Against the claim for an autochthonous and exclusive origin for the Tibetan race is the fact that in skin-color, color and form of hair, eye-color, general physiognomy and bone-structure they vary greatly. By observers they have been characterized as Aryan, negroid, mongoloid, resembling North American Indians, looking much like Chinese, or Annamites, etc. I know Tibetans who have profiles like the woodcut of Savanarola, others who look like pictures of Sitting Bull, and one very powerful (both physically and politically) leader who is strikingly similar to Joe Louis in appearance (and he even knows of the resemblance). Unquestionably many peoples and tribes have been incorporated into the ethnic unit which the Tibetans consider distinctly Tibetan. The Tibetans themselves have entertained, with great sexual hospitality, many others who sojourned in, or passed through, their land. Yet some influence of diet, climate, manner of life, cross-breeding, or whatever it may be, has made them into a group with a distinct and generally recognizable ethnic profile, and consciousness of this fact, measurements and cephalic indices to the contrary, finds expression in the legend.

The legend also suggests southern origins, and this suggestion is strengthened by the incidence (in the generalized term for seed and fruit) of the word for rice instead of the word for barley which now is the main cereal crop throughout Tibet. Rice at present is grown in only a few fringe localities in the extreme southeastern part of Tibet and rice cultivation cannot be considered a traits-complex of current Tibetan culture, although what part it may have had in the origins of that culture is open to conjecture. Somewhat tantalizingly the legend also suggests some aspects of a primitive theory of evolution and points toward significant stages in the development of very early food-gathering and food-growing cultures. It is still, however, a legend and whether a reflection of pre-history or not, the Tibetan believes he is the member of a unique race, and cites that belief as one of the criteria on which his self image is based.

When the Tibetan cited *Sa CHa gCig* (soil extent one) as one of the factors that makes him, or marks him as, one with his fellows, he is in some respects on very solid historical and ecological ground. The entire high plateau (rimmed and cross-ribbed by great mountain ranges) which has been named the Roof of the World, was all within the limits of the short-lived Tibetan empire of the seventh and eighth centuries, and indeed was the base from which Tibetan imperial might reached to other Asian areas. Tibetan power covered it and Tibetan populations filled it. This occurred in spite of the fact that Tibetan political control was subsequently repeatedly fragmented until in modern times some of that territory was lost to an Indian state and came under the control of the British (or became the semi-independent states of Bhutan and Sikkim), while that which remained Tibetan in name was broken up into a large number of

autonomous areas, including so-called Tibet Proper, or central Tibet, which itself was none too cohesive as a power unit. Eastern and northeastern Tibet, where the break-up into autonomous areas of tribal and princeling rule was the greatest, then increasingly were subjected to Chinese military and political pressure and penetration. Throughout the time and the process of these changes the geographically homogeneous area of the Tibetan plateau, which is quite different from surrounding regions has, moreover, remained the habitat of the Tibetan people.

The environment of that plateau, characterized by altitude, great diurnal and seasonal changes of temperature, extremes of storm and wind, and a bleak and inhospitable landscape, by the conditions of survival which it imposed on the people or peoples who either migrated to it or from earliest beginnings were spread throughout it, placed its stamp upon them and there is a half-formed recognition of that influence in the phrase *Sa CHa gCig* (soil extent one). The Tibetans respond too by a feeling of proud proprietorship and a sense of belonging there, and there alone. Descent into the deserts, jungles or lowlands which surround them, though frequently done for pilgrimage, trade, or sheer adventure, is yet like "going into hell."

Among the criteria listed that of nationhood is lacking, and the Tibetan self-image reflects little of the concept of nationalism. This conforms to the facts of Tibetan history. Politically the *Bod KHa Ba* (Tibetan part one[s]) have been much and many times divided. Nationhood existed briefly in the early time of empire and now, under pressure, is again confusedly taking shape as the Tibetans begin to think of statehood and political structure that, as an additional aspect of cultural unity, will match in dimensions and validity the criteria they have traditionally recognized. But until that new concept of nationhood does become clear and valid, the Tibetan self-image, although showing signs of impending change, will remain as outlined here. It is a substitute for, or a sublimation of, nationalism and in relation to it the Tibetan remains a true patriot.

Notes

* This article is based on a paper submitted to the April 1960 annual meeting of the Association for Asian Studies in New York. In formulating the subject matter I am primarily and greatly in debt to many Tibetans – from lamas to herdsmen – who responded freely, citing detail and anecdote, to my questions. The answers varied greatly: sometimes thoughtful friendly in tone; sometimes impassioned as a tribute to their way of life; and sometimes disputatious and even truculent as if in defence of something very precious. In their collective anonymity they are the true authors of what been written. I am also grateful for the comments and criticisms expressed by the members of the Inner Asian Colloquium of the University Washington, which helped clarify and refine its presentation, and to Dr. Robert Miller of the University of Wisconsin for the wording of the title. A final critical reading by Hugh Richardson enabled me to correct one or two mis-statements, and his general agreement with the theme of the paper was an additional endorsement for which I am most thankful.

- 1 "Royal Charter of Incorporation of The Sikkim Research Institute of Tibetology." Sikkim Darbar Gazette, February 2, 1959, Nos. 1, 2, 3.
- 2 S. C. Das, *A Tibetan-English Dictionary* (Calcutta, 1902), p. 897.
- 3 Dr. Leon Hurvitz, University of Washington.
- 4 G. Tucci, *Tibetan Painted Scrolls* (Rome, 1949), Vol. 1, 10.
- 5 Maharajkumar Palden Thondup Namgyal, MS of "Presidential Address", Namgyal Institute of Tibetology, p. 5.

TIBET

The myth of isolation

Alex McKay

Source: P. van der Velde and A. C. McKay (eds.), *New Developments in Asian Studies: An Introduction* (Studies from the International Institute for Asian Studies, Leiden and Amsterdam), London: Kegan Paul International, 1998, pp. 302–16.

Of the many myths concerning Tibet, one of the most persistent has been its image as a land visited by only a handful of Europeans prior to the Chinese take-over in 1950. In fact, it was relatively easy to enter Tibet, and even the so-called 'Forbidden City' of Lhasa had far more European visitors than other Central Asian centres such as Kashgar or Urga. This article discusses the reality behind that myth.

Tibet was one of the last major areas of Central Asia to be reached by Europeans, yet this was not inherently remarkable. Although linked into a network of local trade, Tibet was of little economic interest to outsiders and was not situated on major inter-continental trade routes such as the 'Silk Road'. Its geographical location in the heart of Asia, ringed by mountains, far from sea-ports, and inaccessible by river transport, ensured its inaccessibility.

Although earlier visitors to Central Asia, such as Marco Polo, had described Tibet, there is no record of any European reaching its central heartland until the seventeenth century.¹ The first of these visitors were missionaries, inspired by rumours of a Christian community in the Himalayas, and the main difficulty they faced in entering Tibet was the harsh environment rather than any political opposition to their entry.

It was in 1624 that two Jesuit monks, Antonio de Andrade and Manuel Marques, visited Tsaparang, then the major centre in western Tibet, where they were welcomed by the king of what was then the semi-autonomous state of Guge. Andrade established a Christian church at Tsaparang under the king's patronage, and around 15 Jesuits served there in the next few years. But the newcomers soon became unpopular with the local Buddhist clergy, who saw them as a threat to their power and influence. When the state of Guge was conquered by the Ladakhis in 1630, the new Buddhist rulers proved hostile to Christianity and by 1640 the mission had collapsed. Marques, the last remaining missionary, was left a prisoner of the new regime, never to be heard of again, and the region was then closed to outsiders, primarily due to religious opposition to the missionaries.²

Central Tibet proved equally accessible at first. In 1628, two Jesuits reached Shigatse (Tibet's second-largest town, located 130 miles south-west of Lhasa). They were able

to return in following years and even correspond with their compatriots in Tsaparang. In 1661, two other Jesuit monks, Johann Grueber and Albert D'Orville, became the first Europeans to visit Lhasa while travelling from China to India. Subsequently around 18 monks served at a Capuchin mission which existed in Lhasa from 1707–1711, 1716–1733 and 1741–1745, while the Jesuit Hippolyte Desideri reached Lhasa from western Tibet and remained there from 1716–1721. What was characteristic of all these missionaries was that they apparently enjoyed good relations with the Tibetan aristocracy, but that their presence was strongly opposed by the Buddhist establishment whose faith they disputed.³

Just two laymen are known to have visited Lhasa in the eighteenth century. A French trader, whose name is not recorded, visited Lhasa in 1717, while a Dutch merchant, Samuel van der Putte, travelled to Lhasa in 1728 *en route* to China and returned in 1737. Both men stayed at the Capuchin mission in Lhasa, but we have only limited information on the Dutchman, and none at all on the Frenchman.⁴ In the case of Van der Putte, this was because he ordered all his papers to be burnt before he died, in order to prevent them falling into the hands of Holland's enemies – the British. Only a few personal items survived.

There was, therefore, no particular opposition from the Lhasa authorities towards the entry of foreign travellers up to the mid-18th century. But as those who entered Tibet were proponents of a new religion, they attracted growing opposition from the Buddhist authorities which prevented them establishing a permanent presence. These early missionary endeavours sowed the seeds for the Tibetan belief that Europeans posed a threat to their Buddhist religion.

The imperial agents

The next European visitors to Tibet were the first of the British imperial agents, George Bogle (1774–75) and Samuel Turner (1783). They were dispatched by the Governor of Bengal, Warren Hastings, to the court of Tibet's second-highest religious figure, the Panchen Lama in Shigatse. Both were initially refused permission to enter Tibet, but persisted and were eventually welcomed in Shigatse. Neither, however, was permitted to visit Lhasa.⁵

Tibet had come under the domain of the Manchu Emperors by the 1730s, with two Manchu representatives posted in Lhasa to ensure that the Emperor's will was obeyed. When Bogle arrived, Tibet was ruled by a Regent, who forbade Bogle from visiting Lhasa. Turner established good relations with the Regent, who was visiting Shigatse when he arrived, but Turner was not permitted to visit Lhasa either; the Regent blaming China for the refusal.

Although an eccentric English scholar, Thomas Manning, reached Lhasa in 1811–12 while trying to reach China, official Tibetan attitudes to foreigners had now changed. The Tibetan ruling class were becoming increasingly fearful of British intentions and no longer welcomed foreigners. This situation intensified throughout the nineteenth century as the growth of the British Indian empire came to threaten Tibetan interests. When Sikkim, a traditional ally of Tibet, came under British influence after 1860, Tibetan fears grew and in 1888–89 Tibetan and British forces clashed on the Sikkim frontier. In this atmosphere of mistrust, Tibet, not unnaturally, tried to close its frontier to outsiders.

The ban on the entry of Europeans to Tibet made it difficult for the British to obtain any information about their northern neighbour; an intolerable situation for the imperial power. The Government of India began sending local Indian employees, disguised as pilgrims, across the frontier to gather intelligence. These local employees, known as *pandits*, mapped much of Tibet, including Lhasa. The British also sent Sarat Chandra Das, a Tibetan-speaking Bengali school-teacher to initiate new contacts with Shigatse authorities, and he was then able to make a clandestine visit to the capital in 1882. But when news of Chandra Das's visit came to the attention of the Lhasa authorities, they executed those who had assisted him. The message was clear; Tibet was determined to maintain its isolation.

What was not clear then was the extent to which this policy was determined by the Tibetans, and the extent to which it was encouraged by their Chinese overlords.

Treaties between China and the European powers in 1858 and 1860 allowed Europeans to travel freely in the Chinese Empire, and travellers could obtain Chinese passports supposedly allowing them entry into Tibet. But the Tibetan administrators refused to accept Chinese authority in this matter and continued to refuse entry to foreigners. While acknowledging their treaty obligations, the Chinese actually lacked the power to enforce their nominal authority at Lhasa, which was increasingly autonomous. Yet it was also in China's interests to maintain Tibet's isolation. China had a monopoly in economic areas such as the supply of tea, Tibet's primary beverage, and regarded Tibet as being part of their empire. British India was seen as posing a threat to both China's (steadily diminishing) economic and political supremacy in Tibet.

In his essay 'China and the European Travellers to Tibet, 1860–1880', Luciano Petech has examined the role of China and Tibet in excluding foreign visitors. The Tibetan authorities favoured an isolationist policy and refused to follow Chinese orders to allow foreigners entry. But although this was 'a serious affront to imperial authority',

the Chinese themselves were not happy about the voyages of the foreigners, and thus the disobedience of the Lhasa government served as a convenient screen, i.e. as an adequate reason for dissuading and obstructing by every means the foreign travellers without going so far as an outright refusal.⁶

Thus, during this period, both powers co-operated in keeping Tibet's borders closed to foreign travellers.

Yet despite Tibet's policy of excluding Europeans, numerous travellers did cross into Tibet during the nineteenth century, although after Manning, only two Europeans reached Lhasa in that period. Two Lazarist monks, Huc and Gabet, spent two months there in 1846 before being forced to leave by the Chinese authorities. But while central Tibet was then closed to outsiders, the poorly-guarded periphery of the Tibetan world attracted a steady stream of foreigners in the last quarter of the nineteenth century.

Western Tibet was a particularly popular destination for British imperial officers. Although they were officially forbidden to cross the frontier, the largely unpopulated region was a popular goal for officers on leave, who often travelled there in search of shooting trophies. Though liable to be expelled if they encountered Tibetan officials, many simply avoided populated areas. These journeys were often kept secret by the officers concerned, but the shortage of information on conditions within Tibet available

to the Government of India at that time meant that reports from officers who had travelled there were highly valued by the Intelligence Departments. Captain (later Lieutenant-Colonel Sir) W. F. O'Connor, for example, after being admonished for his cross-border journey in 1896, was then promptly transferred to Military Intelligence to compile reports on Tibetan border areas. These reports were used by the Younghusband mission, on which O'Connor served as intelligence officer.

The Government of India also sponsored a number of suitable officers who applied for permission to enter western Tibet. The pioneering journeys of William Moorcroft in 1812 were under official patronage, as were the well-known journeys by Lieutenant (later Major-General Sir) Hamilton Bower, and those of Captains Deasy and Welby, all of whom travelled extensively in north and western Tibet in the 1890s. These officers all wrote books which publicised their travels, while concealing the government support they enjoyed. In addition, there were a number of other such travellers whose journeys were never publicised and which have been forgotten; men such as Major Macleod, and Major-General Channer, who were both permitted to visit the Mount Kailas-Lake Manasarovar region of western Tibet in 1894–96.⁷

Kailas-Manasarovar was in itself a particularly popular destination. Four of the great rivers of India (the Sutlej, Indus, Brahmaputra and Karnali) arose within that region, and the search for their exact source was of major interest to geographers. Although Lieutenant (later General) Henry Strachey had recorded the existence of a channel between Manasarovar and the nearby Lake Rakas Tal on a pioneering journey in 1846, this discovery was subsequently questioned, and confirming its existence pre-occupied visitors for the rest of the century. It was eventually confirmed by Sven Hedin, the great Swedish explorer, who travelled extensively throughout northern and western Tibet in several journeys between 1894–1908, although unsuccessful in his attempts to reach Lhasa.

Eastern Tibet was similarly attractive to Europeans, but being more heavily populated and with its borders more closely observed by the Chinese and Tibetan authorities, proved a more effective barrier. The numerous attempts made by missionaries and independent travellers to proceed westwards into the Tibetan heartland all ended in failure, but many were able to travel extensively in the frontier regions where neither Lhasa nor Peking exercised full authority.

Most of those attempting to reach Lhasa in this period did so from the largely uninhabited northern regions, where there was little or no barrier to travel. But the Tibetan Government maintained a frontier post at Nagchuka, around 120 miles north of Lhasa, where travellers such as the Russian explorer Przevalsky and the English missionary Annie Taylor were prevented from approaching Lhasa.

Thus, in the latter half of the 19th century, Europeans were able to cross into Tibetan territory, and to travel extensively throughout the Tibetan periphery, although this was largely due to the inability of the Lhasa Government to protect its far-flung frontiers. But access to the central Tibetan heartland of Lhasa and Shigatse was effectively barred. One result of this which the Tibetans had not allowed for was that the prohibition added to the mystique already surrounding Tibet in the western imagination. The forbidden became all the more desirable.

The aura that came to surround the idea of travel in Tibet meant that Europeans began to make liberal use of the term 'Tibet' to include the entire Tibetan cultural world, in order to claim the distinction of having visited the 'forbidden land'. In

particular, they frequently referred to Ladakh as Tibet or 'Little Tibet', and there are numerous travel accounts from the late 19th century whose titles suggest that the author visited Tibet, whereas in fact their travels were limited to Ladakh. Others simply claimed to have been to Tibet when they had not, and some went as far as to profess to have visited Lhasa. Such a claim might not have been easily disproved, but those who did so gave themselves away with obvious fantasies. Henry Hensoldt, for example, who claimed to have visited Lhasa in the 1890s, described his long philosophical discussions with the Dalai Lama, which were, he claimed, possible because the Tibetan leader spoke Hensoldt's German dialect perfectly fluently!⁸

The Anglo-Tibetan construction of isolation

In 1903–04, British imperial fears that Russia was gaining influence in Tibet, allied to the desire to open Tibet to diplomatic communications and free trade, led to the despatch of a mission which fought its way to Lhasa under the political command of Colonel Francis Younghusband. Accompanying Younghusband into Lhasa in August 1904 were 623 British military and civil officers attached to the mission, in addition to 3,448 Indian troops and camp followers.⁹

At least temporarily, Lhasa lost its image as 'the Forbidden City', but political events meant it soon regained that aura. When Younghusband's mission withdrew they left British representatives at so-called 'Trade Agencies' in Gyantse and Yatung (in central and southern Tibet). The British Government in Whitehall, however, refused to allow the Government of India to station a British representative in Lhasa and 16 years passed before a European again visited the Tibetan capital. During that time, Gyantse, 120 miles south-west of Lhasa, became the focus of the British presence in Tibet.

Between 1904 and 1947, more than 100 British officers of the Indian Political Department, the Indian Medical Service and the Indian Army, along with several dozen British technical and clerical staff, lived and worked at Gyantse. The majority served two year terms, but many remained longer, with Henry Martin, an ex-military telegraphist, staying from 1904–1930. There were also regular official visitors on inspection tours, and miscellaneous visits by technicians and even scholars.

The Yatung Trade Agency, situated in the Chumbi Valley *en route* from Sikkim to Gyantse, was the easiest of access from India. Being located just across the border from Sikkim, visitors there attracted little attention from the Tibetan authorities. A Trade Agency was also established at Gartok in western Tibet. Due to its isolation this was manned only by Indian employees, but there were occasional inspection visits by officers of the Raj. They were usually accompanied by a Medical Officer or other companion, enabling a total of around 20 British officials to visit Gartok in the 1904–47 period.

Imperial officials travelling to the Trade Agencies made up the bulk of European visitors to Tibet in the years following the Younghusband mission. But having objected for so long to the Tibetan's policy of excluding foreigners from its territory, the British were in a position to change this policy when they established their influence in Tibet. The Anglo-Tibetan Convention of 1904 (which Younghusband had signed in Lhasa), permitted European traders to visit the Trade Agencies.

Within weeks of the Agencies' opening, the issue of whether other travellers should be permitted entry was raised when a Tibetan-speaking member of the American

Geographical Society, Francis Nichols, applied for permission to visit Lhasa. This was refused, but as he had previously given the Government of India valuable information concerning events on the eastern Tibetan frontier when travelling there, Nichols was allowed to visit Gyantse. His visit, however, ended tragically when he died of pneumonia within days of arriving in Gyantse.¹⁰

Despite Nichols's death, the British Political Officer in Sikkim, who was in immediate charge of the Trade Agencies, recommended that Tibet be opened to any Europeans who wanted to travel there, except for those on shooting expeditions. He concluded that 'the more Tibetans come into contact with Europeans the better'.¹¹

Other elements of government were less certain of the benefits of allowing free access to Tibet. The country was particularly attractive to missionaries and hunters, both of which groups were regarded with particular distaste by the Tibetans on religious grounds. The imperial government also recognised that free access would allow in gold-prospectors and other individuals who would exploit 'the Tibetans' ignorance of the modern world'. Thus the Political Officer was instructed to refer all applications to enter Tibet to his government and in 1906 the Viceroy of India, Lord Minto, observed that 'I do not think we should look upon it [Tibet] as within the range of ordinary tours of visitors to India.'¹²

The basic mechanisms for the British to control access to Tibet were already in place. Existing regulations (dating from 1873) required persons travelling in the Indian frontier districts to obtain an official pass. To visit Sikkim, for example, travellers required a permit from the District Commissioner in Darjeeling. This system was extended to control access to Tibet. Travellers wishing to enter Tibet from Sikkim (the most common route) were required to obtain a further pass issued by the Political Officer in the Sikkimese capital of Gangtok. These permits allowed travellers to proceed on the usual direct route to the Trade Agencies, with a maximum stay of six weeks. Shooting and fishing were forbidden, and travellers were only allowed to visit monasteries at the invitation of their Tibetan authorities.

This system meant that if the Government of India wished to prevent an individual from visiting Tibet, he could be refused permission to enter Sikkim or other border areas, thus preventing his even approaching the frontier. British controlling influence over the administration of nominally autonomous frontier regions such as Sikkim and Kashmir meant that the actual decision could be attributed to the local administration, thus enabling the imperial government to avoid the blame for exclusion.¹³ In practice however, that safeguard was usually only used to exclude known criminals or persons suspected of serving foreign interests. The Government of India did not wish to be seen as preventing travellers' access to areas under its control and permits were generally given freely for entry to areas such as Sikkim.

The Government of India relied on the Chinese to continue to prevent travellers entering Tibet from the east. In 1910, when China refused to allow J. H. Edgar (a missionary on the eastern frontier), to enter Tibet, the Indian Foreign Secretary observed that 'I confess my sympathies are with the Chinese in this matter. They very naturally do not want to be spied upon . . . and I think the Government of India would act similarly.'¹⁴

The Christian missionaries were of particular concern to the Government of India, which recognised that the Tibetans were particularly strongly opposed to their entry. Buddhism was at the heart of the Tibetan socio-political system, and the Tibetans

regarded the missionaries as a direct threat to their historical culture. After the Younghusband mission there were a number of requests by missionaries to be allowed to enter Tibet to proselytise there, but the imperial government refused them all. They even refused to allow the British and Foreign Bible Society to present a copy of the New Testament to the Panchen Lama when he visited India in 1906.¹⁵

The ban on missionaries entering Tibet remained in force throughout the 1904–47 period, and none of them ever reached central Tibet. But the missionaries were never told that their entry was banned because many of them provided valuable intelligence to the imperial government, which wanted to retain their support. Missionaries were simply refused permits, with no reason given.¹⁶

While the treaty which Younghusband had forced upon the Tibetans expressly allowed access to Tibet only for purposes of trade, the Government of India had allowed Francis Nichols' journey to Gyantse within months of the Younghusband mission. They recognised that 'eventually it must be impossible to draw any line between journeys undertaken for purely commercial purposes and those made with any other object'. They were, however, satisfied that existing frontier travel regulations would 'secure our being consulted in every case before any European crosses the southern or western border of Tibet'. Government therefore decided to use the existing controls to ensure that travel to Tibet was initially restricted to those who would advance British interests. Persons such as gold-prospectors would be excluded, but experienced '*bona fide*' travellers of 'temper and discretion', particularly those familiar with Tibetan language and customs, would be permitted to travel there, and the 'systematic acquisition of intelligence would receive all possible encouragement'.¹⁷

What this meant in practice was that initially the only travellers permitted to cross from British India to Tibet were those whose visit would benefit British interests in some way, or those whose social position was such that their discretion could be relied upon. Thus early visitors to Tibet were drawn from the ranks of British aristocracy, the imperial officer class, and known supporters of the imperial government.

In 1920, Charles Bell, the long-serving Political Officer in Sikkim, was permitted by the British Government to accept an invitation from the Dalai Lama to visit Lhasa. He spent a year in the Tibetan capital and after returning to India his policy recommendations formed the basis of Anglo-Tibetan policy in the ensuing years. One of his recommendations was that the number of visitors allowed into Tibet be gradually increased, in order to familiarise the Tibetans with Europeans customs.¹⁸

Bell's policy was adopted and despite Tibetan protests the increase became particularly marked after 1928, when the Sikkim Political Officer was given the authority to issue permits to British (although not other European) travellers to Yatung and Gyantse without reference to his government.¹⁹ Whereas the Gyantse Annual Report of 1925–26 records five visitors, two of whom were apparently non official visitors, the figures for the 1929–30 period show 20 visitors, of whom around 15 were private travellers. The numbers fluctuated somewhat, but on average there were 12–20 private travellers visiting Gyantse annually throughout the 1928–1947 period.²⁰

One factor preventing many individuals from travelling to Gyantse was the expense. Most travellers considered it necessary to hire porters and pack-animals and the artificial exchange rate between Indian and Tibetan currency added to the cost. Yet it could be done cheaply, one or two individuals, such as a Miss Gertrude Bentham in 1925, walked all the way.²¹

Such travels ‘on the cheap’ were not, however, regarded favourably by the British officials dealing with Tibet. They considered that these early ‘backpackers’ harmed the prestige of the British Raj – although there is little evidence to support their belief. What these officers preferred were travellers of their own ‘type’, ex-public schoolboys of the officer class, and the majority of visitors to Tibet during the 1904–47 period were of that class. The effect of this was that most accounts of Tibet in that period are written by a narrow class-based group who supported the interests of the British Raj.²²

Yatung, being much cheaper to reach, yet indisputably ‘in Tibet’, was the most popular destination. In the early 1920s the annual numbers of visitors there were in single figures, but they grew steadily throughout the 1930s. From 1943–44 onwards there was a massive increase in the amount of visitors, peaking in 1945–46, when more than 200 people reached Yatung. This increase was due to the large numbers of wartime servicemen stationed in North India. Many took the opportunity to visit ‘Forbidden Tibet’, while awaiting demobilisation back to Britain. In total, around 1,000 private travellers visited Yatung between 1920 and 1947, although the exact total is impossible to ascertain as many of the entries refer only to a certain individual ‘and party’.

A substantial number of Yatung’s visitors – around 50 – were members of the various Everest expeditions during the 1920s and ’30s. As Nepal refused to allow access to Everest through its territory, these parties entered Tibet through the Chumbi Valley and then traversed southern Tibet on the approach to the mountain, with permits issued by the Tibetan Government.

In addition to official visitors, some travellers entered Tibet without permission. The most notable of these were William McGovern and Alexandra David-Neel, both of whom managed to reach Lhasa while disguised as Tibetans (in 1923 and 1924 respectively). Several other Europeans and Americans – including the crew of a crashed American Air Force bomber – also arrived in Lhasa without permits during World War Two.

A number of other travellers eluded the border controls along the southern and western Tibetan frontier, but their travels were generally restricted to outlying and lightly populated areas. Miss Bentham, for example, having walked back from Gyantse, was refused permission to enter western Tibet, but went there anyway. While a passing British official ignored her presence,²³ most such illicit travellers were apprehended by the Tibetan or British Indian authorities and deported back to India, where they were usually fined a small sum for breaching the various frontier regulations.

Lhasa: forbidden city?

Reaching Lhasa was of course the goal for most travellers and as permission to visit Lhasa required the approval of the Tibetan Government, the British were able to claim that the Tibetans controlled this access. But their control was soon shared with the British.

Following Bell’s visit to Lhasa in 1920–21, a number of British technical advisors were invited to Lhasa to assist in the modernisation of Tibet. Bell’s successors as Political Officer Sikkim also obtained invitations to visit Lhasa and travelled there with a Medical Officer and, latterly, with members of their family. Then in 1936 a visit by the Political

Officer resulted in a permanent British Lhasa Mission being established, and from that time forth an increasing number of Europeans were able to travel there.

Yet the predominant Tibetan attitude to European visitors had not changed. They remained opposed to allowing foreigners into their territory and frequently asked the Government of India to prevent this. In similar fashion, they refused to allow Chinese to enter Tibet from India. Although they invariably permitted British officials to travel up to the Lhasa Mission, other would-be visitors required strong British support before the Tibetans would admit them. Europeans without official connections who applied to the Government of India for permission to visit Lhasa would be told that the Tibetans did not allow entry to private individuals and that there was no point in asking them.²⁴ In fact, would-be visitors could apply directly to the Tibetan Government for travel permission; several Americans obtained permits in this way during the 1930s.

When the British saw political benefits in allowing an individual to visit Lhasa, they would forward the application to the Tibetan Government. The British officers in Lhasa would then solicit approval for the application and this was invariably granted because the Anglo-Tibetan alliance in this period meant that the Tibetan attitude was that 'As the Political Officer in Sikkim is asking for the permission, we see no objection to the proposed visit.'²⁵

This procedure was used to obtain permission for a number of visitors to Lhasa in the 1936–47 period, most notably a German mission in 1939. Although the Government of India and its frontier officers strongly opposed allowing in what was clearly a Nazi initiative contrary to British interests in Asia, Whitehall was following the 'appeasement' policy of the time, and forced the Government of India to assist the Germans to reach Lhasa.²⁶

Concluding remarks

The myth that pre-1950 Tibet was visited by only a handful of Europeans arose partly because of its isolation and difficulty of access, but principally because it was the Tibetan government's policy to exclude foreigners from its territory and that policy suited the interests of Tibet's neighbouring imperial powers. This policy, however, was only effective in regard to central Tibet because the Tibetan government lacked the manpower and resources to prevent foreigners from crossing its far-flung frontiers.

Tibet's isolationist policies developed during the mid-eighteenth century, because the Europeans who had visited Tibet were missionaries who denied the validity of the Buddhist faith. Despite some support from Tibetan aristocracy, who may have seen the missionaries as a counter-balance to the monastic power structure, these initial contacts convinced the Tibetan Government that Europeans would threaten the Buddhist religious system at the heart of Tibetan society. The Chinese encouraged the Tibetans in this belief in order to maintain economic and political influence at Lhasa, and were subsequently unable to force the Tibetans to allow entry to Europeans even when they needed to do so in order to honour international agreements and demonstrate their claim to control Tibet.

For most of the first half of this century, the British enjoyed considerable influence at Lhasa, and even acted as Tibet's patron. They acknowledged the Tibetans' desire for isolation and tried to restrict the entry of foreigners to those whose presence was

of benefit to the imperial government. The myth of ‘Forbidden Tibet’ assisted them in this. While the Government of India were criticised for their role in excluding travellers, they were following the Tibetans’ wishes with this policy, just as the Chinese had in the nineteenth century.

As a consequence of these policies, the ‘Shangri-la’ image of Tibet in the popular Western imagination was stimulated by the aura of the forbidden and those who did reach Tibet preserved the image of the ‘Forbidden Land’. Imperial officials did so partly because they had to censor their accounts of government policy and partly in order to discourage applications to enter there. But it is also apparent that both official and non-official visitors preferred to enjoy the celebrity they gained from breaching Tibet’s ‘isolation’ rather than to reveal the reality. When they wrote of their travels they continued to propagate the myth, not least because their publishers encouraged such imagery in order to increase sales of their books.²⁷

Yet in reality only central Tibet was ever effectively closed to foreigners. Those who wished to travel in the inhospitable western and northern areas were generally able to do so, with or without official permission. From the 1920s onwards, even permission to travel on the trade route to Gyantse was rarely refused, and British officials, or those with British support, were able to travel on to Lhasa with Tibetan Government approval.

Nearly one hundred Europeans are known to have entered Tibet in the 1700–1900 period, including around 24 who reached Lhasa. In the first half of this century, aside from the 623 officers with the Younghusband mission, a total of 84 Europeans visited Lhasa, and many of these paid return visits.²⁸ We have noted that more than a thousand people are recorded as visiting Yatung in this period, and while we cannot be entirely accurate, the total number of European travellers who entered Tibetan territory in 1900–1950, including Younghusband’s men and illicit travellers, must have been between 1,500 and 2,000, numbers far in excess of those for European travellers to other Himalayan states such as Bhutan, Nepal and Mongolia. As one observer noted

‘Outer Mongolia . . . is such *terra incognita* that Tibet is practically Coney Island by comparison’.²⁹

Although only a handful of communist ‘fellow travellers’ and official guests were allowed to visit Tibet during the 1950–80 period, China has now reversed its former policy of forbidding European visitors from entering Tibet. Mass tourism is now their goal, and although Tibetan resistance to Chinese imperialism means frequent interruptions to the ‘open door’ policy, the number of tourists have grown rapidly. Around a thousand Europeans visited the Kailas-Manasarovar region in 1994, compared with a ‘handful’ in 1984, while the number of visitors to Lhasa in that period similarly rose from a few hundred to tens of thousands.³⁰ Tibet is now neither ‘Forbidden’ nor even ‘isolated’, but just another ‘exotic’ destination for tourists.

Notes

- 1 Although a Franciscan Minorite friar, Odoric de Pordenone, provided descriptions of Tibet in the early fourteenth century which has led many to believe that he may have travelled there during his return from Peking to Padua. This remains unproven.

- 2 Regarding the early Christian missionaries, see Wessels, C. J., *Early Jesuit Travellers in Central Asia*, The Hague 1924.
- 3 *Ibid.*
- 4 Re van de Putte, see Lequin, F., & Meijer, T., *Samuel van de Putte, een mandarijn uit Vlissingen (1690–1745)*, Middleburg 1989. Re the French traveller, see Petech, L., *China and Tibet in the Early 18th Century*, Leiden 1972, p. 26.
- 5 For a general account of Bogle and Turner's missions, see Woodcock, G., *Into Tibet: the early British explorers*, London 1971.
- 6 Petech, L., 'China and the European Travellers to Tibet, 1860–1880', in *T'oung Pao*, Vol. LXII.4, 1972, pp. 232–33.
- 7 Oriental and India Office Collection [hereafter OIOC] L/P&S/10/186, file note by 'K.F.' & 'R.W.S.', 11 January 1906.
- 8 Hensoldt, H., 'New Light on the Lhasa Mystery', in *Orient and Occident*, (1.1.) Sydney 1907, p. 16.
- 9 Landon, P., *Lhasa*, London 1905, Vol. 2, pp. 364–367.
- 10 National Archives of India [hereafter, NAI] 1905 Secret E February 1384–1397, various correspondence.
- 11 NAI FD, 1906 Secret E February 98–109, White to Government of India, 31 October 1905.
- 12 NAI FD 1905, External B March 123–129, India to J. C. White, 24 January 1905; FD 1906 External B August 205–206, file note by Viceroy Minto, 31 October 1904.
- 13 As the Political Officer stated in regard to an American traveller considered politically undesirable, 'I shall easily be able to get the Sikkim Durbar to say that they do not want them to enter the state'; OIOC L/P&S/12/4248, F. Williamson to India, 30 April 1931.
- 14 OIOC L/P&S/10/186, Sir Edward Grey to Sir John Jordan, 9 March 1907; NAI FD, Secret E, 1911 February 235–238, file note by E. H. S. Clarke, 29 November 1910.
- 15 NAI FD 1906 External B January 209–210, Calcutta Branch of the British and Foreign Bible Society to Government of India 4 January 1906, and draft reply, 19 January 1906.
- 16 See for example, NAI FD Secret E July 48–49, File note by C. Russell, 9 June 1905.
- 17 OIOC L/P&S/10/186, file note by C. L. S. Russell, 12 January 1906.
- 18 OIOC L/P&S/10/1011-1286, Bell to India, 9 May 1921 enclosed within Viceroy to Secretary of State, 16 May 1921.
- 19 OIOC L/P&S/10/1011-4764, India to Political Officer Sikkim, 16 August 1928.
- 20 All figures for the number of visitors to Gyantse and Yatung are taken from the Agencies' annual reports, which are preserved in the OIOC L/P&S/10-218 and L/P&S/12-4166 series.
- 21 OIOC MSS Eur D979, Ludlow Collection, diary entry of 13 May 1925.
- 22 McKay, A. C., *Tibet and the British Raj: The Frontier Cadre, 1904–1947*, London 1997, pp. 146–47, 170–74.
- 23 OIOC L/P&S/12/4163-1165, Report of F. Williamson, 1932.
- 24 See, for example, OIOC L/P&S/12-4248, Williamson to a Mrs Joan Hackett, 9 July 1935.
- 25 OIOC L/P&S/12/4247-7719, Government of Tibet to [British employee] Norbu Dhondup, 17 October 1938.
- 26 OIOC L/P&S/12/4343, various correspondence; Interview with Mr H. Richardson, November 1990.
- 27 McKay, *op. cit.*, pp. 205–206.
- 28 Cooper, J., 'European Visitors to Lhasa', undated information sheet available from the Tibet Society U.K.
- 29 John Gunther, 1939; quoted in the *Inner Asian Expeditions* catalogue, San Francisco 1991.
- 30 Bellezza, J. V., 'Kang Rinpoche Trashed and Commercialised', *Himal* (8.1), p. 23.

'WE WANT A UNITED TIBET'*

Alex McKay

Source: A. C. McKay, *Tibet and the British Raj: The Frontier Cadre 1904–1947*, Richmond: Curzon Press, 1997, pp. 195–211.

As the first Europeans to reside in Tibet in the modern era, the [Tibet] cadre [of officials of the British Indian Political Department who served in Tibet] had a unique opportunity to shape our knowledge of that land. They became its main interpreters to the outside world and the historical image of Tibet held in the West today is largely based on the information they obtained and propagated. Seven cadre officers wrote books wholly or partly about Tibet, with another by Younghusband, the cadre's 'founding father'. These were influential works, which reached a wide audience and left a lasting impression on European scholarship.¹

Despite this scholarship, the word 'Tibet' still conjures up a series of images of a 'Shangri-La'; images which are more mythical than historical. Whereas mythical images of other unknown lands, such as Australia or Africa, faded as those places became known to European science, an image of Tibet as a spiritual realm beyond precise empirical understanding has survived to this day.

The continued existence of both historical and mythical images is largely due to the political circumstances surrounding the British presence in Tibet. Ideas and images were weapons in the political battles the cadre fought. They were used not to construct an accurate portrait, but one which served various Anglo-Tibetan interests. This resulted in the survival of two images; historical Tibet, and the Tibet of the imagination, a fantasy land of magic and mystery.

That the British sought to produce an image of Tibet was originally implicit in the search for contact and meaning. After Younghusband, it became explicit, with the cadre specifically stating that they sought to propagate ideas and images for a political purpose. This was part of a battle to establish a view of Tibet on the international stage, and the cadre used images as tools to develop a strong Tibetan 'buffer' state. They saw, 'in the case of Tibet . . . [little or no] . . . difference between propaganda and policy'.²

Although the immediate cause of the Younghusband mission was the determination to exclude Russian influence from Tibet, a significant underlying cause was the need for more information about India's northern neighbour. In the 19th century, the Tibetans had largely succeeded in preventing Europeans from entering the main centres of Tibetan culture and the Government of India had only limited knowledge of their government and leading personalities. None of the 19th century

pioneers of European Tibetan scholarship had had access to the centres of Tibetan culture. There were reports from *pandits* and agents such as Chandra Das, but at the turn of the century, there was a great shortage of up-to-date political and strategic intelligence.

The British could not allow this situation to continue. Imperial power relied on the continuing flow of information, including that from their spheres of interest beyond the frontiers. This need for intelligence made the Younghusband mission a logical imperial response to their enforced ignorance about their northern neighbour.

Defining the Tibetan state which British forces entered in 1903–04 is difficult. There was then a fundamental difference between European and Asian understandings of statehood. The European model was the nation-state; a territorial entity, within defined borders, in which a single government was sovereign and enjoyed a monopoly of force. Citizens of a nation-state were assumed to be predominantly from a single ethnic group, or composed of ethnic groups sharing certain aims and assumptions and coming together in a single state for mutual benefit, as with the United Kingdom. The assumption that citizens of such a state shared common interests and perceptions meant that their identity was defined as characterised by certain shared qualities and symbols; language, culture, collective history and so on.³

Tibet in 1904 was not a nation-state in the European understanding. Despite centralising structures, it included a variety of political and administrative formations, in which a single central power did not consistently maintain authority throughout a fixed territory. Tibet even included enclaves under the jurisdiction of Bhutan and Sikkim and, at various times in its history, power centres such as Shigatse conducted dealings with foreign powers without reference to Lhasa.⁴

The principalities which made up eastern Tibet were particularly reluctant to allow Lhasa to exercise secular authority in their domain. Lhasa was often, in their perspective, a remote and largely nominal authority. Even the religious authority of Lhasa vested in the Gelugpa sect was not necessarily acknowledged in these areas, where the prevailing sectarian orientation was towards the Bön faith, or other Buddhist sects such as the Nyingma.

Yet Tibet clearly existed as a distinguishable historical entity. Tibetans were recognised as a distinct ethnic group, even by the Chinese. They maintained a unique social system, free of the religiously-sanctioned social divisions of Hindu India, with aspects such as fraternal polyandry which were absent from Han Chinese society. Similarly, Tibetan language, landscape, art, architecture, dress and diet, as well as their economic and gender relations, were all clearly distinguished from those of neighbouring cultures. These socio-cultural elements of their identity can be traced back to the earliest recorded periods of Tibetan history around the 7th century AD and some are clearly older.⁵

These shared socio-cultural values contributed to a strong sense of collective identity among the peoples of the region, which persisted despite changing institutional loyalties. The key element of this collective identity was their Buddhist faith, which had been an integral part of their social and political systems since at least the 14th century.⁶ The Tibetans defined their own identity by the term *nang pa*, meaning a Buddhist, or an ‘insider’. Non-Buddhists, even those of Tibetan race such as the minority Muslim community, were termed ‘*phyi pa*’ or ‘outsiders’.⁷ The indigenous

construction of Tibetan identity was, therefore, primarily religious. It was this religious orientation which gave a fundamental historical unity to their community, particularly when outside threats to their religion arose. Their unity then largely subsumed regional and factional divisions within that society.

Their conception of themselves as a political entity was of Tibet as a religious territory, the ideal home of Buddhism. This understanding had governed their foreign relations with countries such as China. The Tibetan Government officially described their state in such terms as 'a purely religious country' and 'dedicated to the well-being of humanity . . . the religious land of Tibet'. They demonstrated that this was not purely rhetoric by such actions as banning, on moral grounds, the export of live animals for slaughter in India.⁸

There is considerable academic discussion today about how best to describe the Tibetan polity which the British encountered. Certainly it resembled models of pre-modern states, in which polities were 'defined by centres, borders were porous and indistinct, and sovereignties faded imperceptibly into one another'.⁹

* * *

If Tibet was to act as a 'buffer state' for India, the British needed it to be transformed into a strong, united and clearly defined entity, on the nation-state model. But as it lacked many of the preconditions of statehood, the British had to persuade the Tibetan Government to create or develop the essential elements of national identity: state structures (those aspects of centralised authority such as government, law, and boundaries) and social processes (those aspects of society with a shared consciousness of unified or related identity, such as traditions, values, and belief systems).

British India provided a precedent for this process. The gradual expansion of British sovereignty there contributed to the creation of Indian national structures and processes which had a considerable influence upon the creation of an Indian identity and nationhood. By establishing India's boundaries and claiming sovereignty within them, and by taking responsibility for the welfare of the peoples therein, the British helped to create India as a single, defined entity, peopled by 'Indians'. They then devised strategies of 'improvement' designed to appeal to various social groups to persuade them to support, and identify with, the new state.¹⁰ The cadre sought to repeat that process in Tibet.

In imposing an Indo-Tibetan border at the Simla Convention, the British helped define Tibet as a geographical state. But the border was drawn as a line of defence for India, not to divide India and Tibet along racial, socio-cultural or religious lines. With time, this boundary acquired a definitive character despite the absence of formal demarcation in some areas. India and Tibet were thus created by their border; the border was not separating pre-existing states.¹¹

The British twice attempted to define as 'Indian', areas which were clearly Tibetan territory. [. . .] Younghusband tried to annex the Chumbi Valley to India, and Bell succeeded in taking Tawang. When Whitehall prevented India from absorbing the Chumbi it was a significant step towards imposing central control over frontier policy. Instead of being absorbed into India, and subjected to a process of 'Indianisation', the British defined the Chumbi as Tibetan and consequently encouraged Lhasa to exert its authority there.¹²

In the 19th century, moves such as Younghusband’s had almost invariably resulted in an extension of British imperial frontiers. But in the 20th century, Whitehall called a halt to expansion and the frontiersmen were generally forced to accept central authority. Tawang was an anomaly; Bell succeeded there largely because Britain had other concerns at the time and the annexation escaped notice.

Chumbi, Tawang, and O’Connor’s plan to set-up a state under the Panchen Lama’s rule all showed that the British did not originally regard Tibet as having a single, geographically defined identity. But, after the Simla Convention, the cadre began to promote just such an identity for Tibet.

* * *

Towards the end of the 19th century, Tibet’s policy of isolation had paradoxically led to considerable public interest in this ‘forbidden land’. There was considerable competition among European and Russian explorers to be the ‘first’ to reach Lhasa until, as Curzon declared to Sven Hedin, the Younghusband mission ‘destroyed the virginity of the bride to whom you aspired.’¹³

The allure of the unknown meant that not only the government but also the British public wanted to know more about Tibet. This demand was temporarily filled by a number of books about the Younghusband mission written by army officers or journalists who accompanied Younghusband.¹⁴ Not unexpectedly, these writers sought to justify the mission, which had attracted considerable criticism in anti-imperialist circles.

These works presented the Tibetan Government and the religious system surrounding it in a negative light. They defended such controversial matters as the devastating death-toll inflicted by trained troops with modern weapons on primitively-armed, irregular forces. Their descriptions of Tibet and its people at that time were typical of the discourse of war. The London *Times* correspondent, for example, described Tibetans as a ‘stunted and dirty little people’.¹⁵

Even frontier officers who were later to describe the Tibetans in laudatory terms, then joined in condemning them; Bell was associated with a military report which described the Tibetans as ‘untruthful and faithless, deceitful and insincere’ and Tibetan Buddhism as ‘a disastrous parasitic disease’.¹⁶ But this discourse must be seen in its context. It was produced during a period of Anglo-Tibetan conflict, and these negative images were, in general, characteristic only of that period, although echoes of them did survive into a later era.

Following Foucault and Edward Said, it is commonly argued that knowledge is constructed in a form determined by dominant power structures, and that dominant knowledge was used by the imperial powers to denigrate local knowledge, social structures and power systems, ultimately preventing an objective understanding of one society by the other. Yet in the case of Tibet, the images produced were, after the initial period of conflict, largely positive ones, although there was a sound political motive behind this construction, as will be seen.

In 1909–1911, the publication of books by White and Younghusband and an article by Bailey in *Blackwoods* magazine, signalled the replacement of the discourse of war by a more sympathetic approach, which became pronounced in the later works of Bell and Macdonald.¹⁷ Tibet was no longer portrayed as hostile; indeed in Bailey’s article it was simply an exotic location for *shikar*. In later years officers such as Bell and

Macdonald explained Tibet and its culture in sympathetic and comparative terms designed to portray it as ‘familiar’. Thereafter, writings by cadre officers assumed the readers’ understanding of this transformation.

A comparison of two descriptions of the 13th Dalai Lama’s early period of rule, both by cadre officers whom the Tibetans remember as sympathetic to them, clearly demonstrates the change in approach. In 1905, O’Connor described how the young Dalai Lama had acted

in accordance with the dictates of his own untrammelled will. No person or party of the State dared for a moment to oppose him. His brief rule was signalised by numerous proscriptions, banishments, imprisonings and torturings. Neither life nor property was safe for a moment.¹⁸

Forty years later, Sir Charles Bell described the young Tibetan leader’s actions in that period in very different terms:

His courage and energy were inexhaustible; he recoiled from nothing . . . [By] . . . skill, tinged with humour . . . he surmounted the obstacles . . . He was young and strong, and he worked continuously.¹⁹

This change in perspective was initially due to the cessation of hostilities and became more pronounced in the new era of Anglo-Tibetan relations which followed Bell’s establishment of friendship with the Dalai Lama. In return for following Bell’s ‘advice’, the Dalai Lama received British support for his regime. Apart from the material aspect of support, the cadre produced an image of Tibet which was designed to serve the interests of both parties. The resulting image portrayed an ideal Tibet, an ideal which their policies were also designed to create.

* * *

When the cadre officers began gathering information in Tibet, their earliest concern was with matters of strategic and military value; the strength of Tibet’s army, the state of the passes into India, etc. Their earliest collations of information were in internal government reports which built up knowledge within the system, so that Secretariat officials such as Louis Dane acquired an expertise in Tibetan matters based on the knowledge acquired by the cadre.

After 1910, books and articles by cadre officers reached the general reading public, who read them in the expectation of receiving an accurate account of the country and its people – and cadre officers did try to discover ‘the truth’ about their subject. They wanted to learn as much as they could about the country and its people because it attracted them personally. If it did not, it was very easy for them to get a transfer back to India. But they understood ‘truth’ as being knowledge in empirical and scientifically ascertainable form.

Cadre officers therefore made considerable efforts to establish accurate records of Tibet. In most cases where their information was unreliable, they noted that in their reports, as we have seen in the case of trade figures. The search for ‘truth’ was seen, in the ethos of the time, as a morally higher purpose behind an official’s day-to-day

activities. Increasing the existing body of knowledge was considered to be part of the ‘civilising mission’ of the imperial nations. Lord Curzon was in no doubt that increasing the body of knowledge was part of the wider function of an Indian official. ‘It is’ he proclaimed, ‘equally our duty to dig and discover, to classify, reproduce and describe, to copy and decipher, and to cherish and conserve’.²⁰

However, while the cadre often qualified the information they supplied, there were other factors which affected the ‘truth’ as they gave it. Officers could, by selectively presenting opinion as ‘truth’, use their status as experts ‘on the spot’ to present information in a form designed to promote particular policies and actions by Delhi and Whitehall.

The cadre also told their superiors what they wanted to hear, as in reports containing praises for fellow cadre officers – ‘Mr Macdonald has as usual managed his work tactfully and efficiently’ – and even self-praise: ‘by tact and influence I kept them in bounds’. Annual reports from the Trade Agencies always contained a line such as ‘Relations with all officials continue to be friendly’, and when this was omitted by the Yatung Agent in 1940, this subjective judgement was added to the report by the Political Officer before he submitted it to government.²¹

Generally the cadre were more subtle than this, however. When Charles Bell tried to persuade his government to accept the Dalai Lama’s offer of British control of Tibet’s foreign relations, he reported that the Tibetans’ character, ‘though in many ways admirable is permeated by a vein of impracticability, which prevents them from coming to a final decision’ – implying that Tibet would not be capable of conducting its own foreign relations. Such attempts to justify British command by presenting the indigenous culture as inferior were a common imperial tactic.²² Bell’s statements were also an example of how some knowledge could be ‘true’, but of interest only to positivist science, while other information could be both ‘true’ and politically useful.

That the Tibetan Government were ‘naïve’, became an article of faith among the cadre and, while this description was appropriate in some instances, after the British departed they admitted that although the Tibetans ‘played at being a very simple people . . . they were shrewd diplomatic operators’.²³

Cadre officers’ reports also reflected their own inherent perceptions. These perceptions did change with time, and vary with the individual. For example, when the Gyantse Trade Agency was opened, O’Connor hired a Tibetan Buddhist exorcist, who ‘kindly expelled all the devils and spirits from the new stables’ in what O’Connor found a ‘very interesting’ ceremony. Yet in the 1940s, George Sheriff described similar religious rites as ‘dreadful examples of the backwardness of Tibet . . . [and a] . . . complete waste of money’.²⁴

But these individual variations in perception were largely submerged in a collective approach to, and understanding of, Tibet. This was deliberately inculcated in the cadre by their imperial training process. Of course this process was not designed to produce detached observers and social scientists. It was designed to produce imperial frontier officers who could be relied upon to follow the general trends of Government of India policy. This meant that while cadre officers gained a great understanding of Tibet and made genuine efforts to encourage what they considered to be improvements there, they never forgot that their first duty was to the British Government of India. Their perspective was governed by that sense of duty.

Perhaps the most obvious characteristic of the cadre's perspective was its very narrow class-base. Just as the British imperial process marginalised the voice of the indigenous service class, so too was the voice of the British service class ignored. The clearest example of this was in the way in which the longest-serving Europeans in Tibet have left almost no historical trace.

Long-service in Tibet was part of an officer's personal prestige. In their memoirs, they tended to exaggerate the length of time they served there. Yet the men who spent the longest time in Tibet were not officers, but two Telegraph Sergeants, Henry Martin and W. H. Luff, and the longest time spent in Lhasa was the term served by Radio Officer Reginald Fox. However, none of these three Londoners published any work, or left personal papers.

Sergeant Henry Martin was a former labourer, who served with Younghusband. He remained in Gyantse as a Telegraphist, and later Head Clerk, from 1904 until he retired in 1931. He was twice married to Tibetan women. Martin died soon after retiring, having found that despite 'his record of long faithful service . . . hard to beat in the annals of a Government office', his government were unwilling to correct an anomaly which reduced his pension by a third. Luff, the sergeant who escorted the Dalai Lama into India in 1910, also remained in Tibet from the Younghusband Mission until he retired in the late 1920s. A colourful character, in contrast to the 'always straight' Martin, Luff then had a brief, unsuccessful career as a gardener in Weir's Gangtok Residency and died in Darjeeling in 1942. Reginald Fox served as Lhasa Mission Radio Officer from March 1937 until 1950 and similarly died soon after retiring. While he and his Tibetan wife were frequently mentioned by travellers, there is almost no trace of him in surviving official records.²⁵

The absence of these voices is significant in emphasising that the historical image of Tibet was constructed by a very small group of the British officer class. As Fox, Luff and Martin all sought to remain in Tibet after retirement, their involvement in the country must have been as committed as any cadre officer; but the understanding they gained was not utilised, or at least not acknowledged, by the cadre. They were not normally included in meetings with the Tibetan ruling class and the perspectives gained from their social contacts with lower levels of Tibetan society were not reflected in the dominant image created. The Tibet cadre did not admit British 'lower ranks', no matter how experienced or knowledgeable, to the ranks of opinion and image makers.

Another important factor was the cadre officer's need to balance their personal impressions of Tibet with their career ambitions. In the early years, when Anglo-Tibetan policy was being constructed by negotiation between various strands of British opinion, an officer such as O'Connor could risk being outspoken. As he told Bailey 'I think in the long run one will not suffer from having opinions'.²⁶ But once general trends of policy had been established, an officer expressing a radical criticism of the status quo was liable to be regarded as having poor judgement or unsound opinions. While the Politicals included a number of men of legendary eccentricity, such characters were not used on the politically sensitive Tibetan frontier and ambitious officers generally tailored their opinions to please their superiors.

This can be clearly seen in two cases where Politicals posted to Gyantse formed views which differed significantly from the usual cadre perception. It is notable that neither officer remained in Tibet for a full term and that they had little or no effect on Anglo-Tibetan relations.

The recorded memories of 1933 Gyantse Agent Meredith Worth suggest an image of Tibet closer to that presented by Communist Chinese sources than that offered in British sources. Interviewed in 1980, Worth recalled that

My memories are of many cheerful parties in the Fort and in the homes of wealthy families, the dominance and brutality of the Lamas and officials towards the serf population and the prevalence of venereal diseases. . . . It was, therefore, for me a relief to read recently in Han Suyin’s book ‘Lhasa, the Open City’ [which promotes a polemically positive view of Communist rule in Tibet] that those conditions no longer exist.²⁷

Paul Mainprice confided to his 1944 diary that

I have serious doubts whether Tibet is at all fit for independence and whether the present system of Government should be bolstered up. Would China in control of Tibet really be a very serious menace to India? As we don’t seem to do much developing of Tibet, I question whether the Chinese would not be able to do it to our own mutual advantage. Of course the Tibetan aristocracy and officials would not like it, but the peasants preferred the Chinese regime in Eastern Tibet in the early years of this century.²⁸

The doubts which Mainprice expressed over British policy in Tibet do reflect a different perspective from that of other cadre officers. Mainprice ‘was always concerned for the underdog’. He was one of the few imperial officers to gain good relations with the warlike Mishmi tribe during service in Assam and after Indian Independence he travelled to Kashmir. His diaries of that journey record his sympathy and support for the Muslim populace, which led to his being arrested, beaten, and then expelled by the new Indian government.²⁹

Neither Worth nor Mainprice appears to have expressed these views publicly during their imperial service. This self-censorship helped to ensure that the dominant image of Tibet was not affected by alternative views, even those of members of the Political Department. The cadre spoke with one voice and that unity was a part of its strength. They became the dominant voice from Tibet because they deliberately suppressed alternative perspectives.

* * *

There was one factor influencing the image of Tibet which the cadre could not control. That was the commercial element, which had a very significant effect. Human nature meant and still means, that the reading public were interested in the sensational and colourful aspects of that land.

During the 1920s, books about General Pereira’s and Alexandra David-Neel’s journeys to Lhasa were published. The late General’s diary was a positivist account of Tibet, the journey legitimised by its catalogue of dates, places and scientific observations. David-Neel’s account, in contrast, provided few precise facts, but gave a colourful and entertaining description of Tibet’s people and culture. Pereira’s book was never reprinted; David-Neel’s has remained in print for nearly seventy years.³⁰

The cadre's books were published by commercial publishers who needed to take account of public taste. Thus when Bailey submitted draft chapters of his memoirs of Tibet, the publisher's reader returned it with suggestions on how to make it more interesting for the general public. The reader advised Bailey that while his writing was

all right for the Journal of the R.G.S. . . . the general reader wants something more human – a hint of the authors[sic] physical and spiritual reaction to his disappointments and to his successes . . . A little description too of the peoples . . . the scenery also . . . which must be colourful . . . [and have] . . . a thrill in the telling.³¹

The result of this economic demand was that cadre officers' books contained the commercially necessary amount of 'colourful' and 'thrilling' images. Bell and Richardson's books, aimed at a more academic audience, contain the minimum of such matter. But the memoirs of other officers and official visitors contain numerous descriptions of sky burials, religious dances, hermit's retreats, aristocratic pageantry, oracle's trances and the lengthy and (in European eyes) peculiar menus at banquets; themes which recur in virtually every book. Thus while cadre officers personally had a more balanced view of Tibet, popular demand led to an emphasis on more colourful images. This commercial factor has been largely ignored in the debate over Orientalism, which ascribes political motives to the human attraction to and desire for, 'exotic' images.

The principal competition to the historical image produced by the cadre was and still is, the 'mystical' image; Tibet as a sacred land in which the paranormal was commonplace.³² Himalayan Tibet, in particular the Mount Kailas-Lake Manasarovar region, has held sacred associations for Indian religions since the pre-Christian era. But although this representation of a sacred land predates the encounter with the West, it has been greatly enhanced by European writings.³³

European writings on 'mystical' Tibet were directed at other Europeans: much of it was regarded with bemusement by the Tibetans. Yet while it used the language of myth, not science, the mystical image did appear to contradict the more prosaic views of those in regular contact with the Tibetans. As the cadre also appealed to a European audience, they were forced to confront this alternative image.

Yet the cadre did not try to destroy this exotic representation. Instead, they tacitly encouraged it, as they found that the idea of Tibet's separate identity was reinforced by these colourful images, which reached a wide audience. They also provided a positive moral image for Tibet, and claiming the moral high-ground became of great importance after the Chinese take-over in the 1950s.

The cadre realised that there was no inherent conflict between the image they sought to present, and the image of 'Mystic Tibet'. Nor was that popular image a political issue in the sense that neither the Chinese, nor the Russians, sought political benefit by emphasising Tibet's mystical aura. The image was, and still is, a weapon against which China has no effective response.

In their published writings the cadre implicitly encouraged the mystical image of Tibet. Their books did seem to contradict the more fantastic accounts of Tibet because they had not observed any scientifically inexplicable events there. But they

used metaphors and symbols of remote space, isolation and timelessness to maintain the implicit sense that Tibet was exotic. For example, the introduction to Younghusband’s account of his mission to Lhasa describes Tibet as ‘a mysterious, secluded country in the remote hinterland of the Himalayas’. That they did not observe any scientifically inexplicable events was even a matter of regret to the British. Gould’s secretary observed that the Tibetans ‘may believe implicitly in various psychic phenomena’ but that ‘I was never fortunate enough to witness these myself’.³⁴

There were limits to the cadre’s endorsement of Tibetan mysticism. In practice they were reluctant to accept incidents which the Tibetans regarded as miraculous. Macdonald described seeing the ‘corpse’ of a Chumbi Valley monastery oracle, only to hear that it had revived four days later. ‘I suppose’ wrote Macdonald ‘this must have been a case of suspended animation, for no other explanation would fit the circumstances.’ On the other hand, Bell, in an unpublished manuscript, observed without comment that Gangtok Residency was haunted. There was an ‘apparition of an old woman, also a boy and girl’ which were harmless, but there was also a ghost described as having ‘the body of a red mule and the head of tiger’. Bell wrote that ‘whenever one of my police orderlies saw it he fired a shot at it immediately’.³⁵

The mystical image was part of the attraction of service in Tibet. Younghusband in particular understood Lhasa as having a wider, symbolic significance and underwent powerful spiritual experiences there leading him to pursue this path at the expense of his career in government service. Significantly, this in no way damaged his prestige within the Tibet cadre, and the last British Political Officer Sikkim, Arthur Hopkinson, also retired to a spiritual life, albeit in more conventional form as an Anglican clergyman.

Tibetan religion was of genuine interest to most cadre officers and remained part of the allure of service there. One consequence of this was that as long as travellers avoided referring to political matters and maintained British prestige, the cadre had no particular objection to their seeking spiritual enlightenment in Tibet. But the cadre sought to exclude even renowned scholars whom they considered politically unreliable.³⁶

Alexandra David-Neel, who made an illicit visit to Lhasa in 1924, trod a fine line here. She was an elderly woman, and, as she travelled disguised as a Tibetan, her actions did not lower imperial prestige. The British did object to her ignoring India’s frontier travel regulations and commenting on the British policy of excluding travellers from Tibet, but her works were immensely popular. As they emphasised Tibet’s separate identity, they served British Indian interests.

David-Neel also studied Tibetan mysticism while generally remaining within the Western academic tradition; a synthesis the cadre could admire. By presenting herself as a pro-British European with a similar class background and attitudes to the cadre’s own, she gained their acceptance as a harmless, even admirable, traveller from within the tradition of aristocratic European eccentrics.³⁷

* * *

The British role in the construction of Tibet’s historical image is important today because, in the absence of a viable alternative, their construction became the dominant

historical image. That image remains dominant, yet it is image which reflects the political realities of the 1904-47 period.

The cadre needed to create a historical image of Tibet which served the political interests of the British and their Lhasa allies. This was the most significant element in shaping the information they obtained. What mattered was to create an image of Tibet as a strong, united nation-state and friendly neighbour to India. This meant projecting Tibet's historical ties with India at the expense of those with China. As one Political Officer wrote

One of our main political aims [was] showing that Tibet had its own art etc. and that in some ways Tibet is more closely allied to India than to China.³⁸

The main focus of the cadre's historical image was what we might call the 'core' image; one of Tibet about to become a modern nation-state, united under a single government, sovereign within its borders and existing as a friendly, and indeed admirable, neighbour to British India. The core image was most clearly articulated by Charles Bell, who wove the key ingredients together. As Bell described it

Modern Tibet . . . rejects . . . Chinese suzerainty and claims the status of an independent nation, [one in which] . . . national sentiment . . . is now a growing force. The Dalai Lama is determined to free Tibet as far as possible from Chinese rule [and in this he has the support of] the majority of the Tibetan race . . . [who] . . . see in him . . . the only means of attaining their goal . . . [Anglo-Tibetan relations are of] cordial friendship [as] they are both religious peoples, [in contrast to the Chinese] . . . Tibet [would] at length secure . . . recognition of the integrity and autonomy of her territory.³⁹

Charles Bell and his successors designed this image of the new Tibet to suit both the cadre and Dalai Lama's government. Both parties thus co-operated in presenting this picture of a united and progressive Tibetan state and they have continued to do so. Since the 1950s the Tibetan Government-in-exile has generally carried on using that image to promote their interests, continuing, for example, to recommend books by Bell, and by Richardson, who, in the 1960s wrote what remains the most authoritative history of Tibet.⁴⁰

One effect of this alliance was that the British privileged the Lhasa perspective. They did not, for example, articulate the interests of the eastern Tibetan principalities which aspired to autonomy, or even to closer ties with China. The result was a Lhasa-centric historical image.

Yet the predominantly empirical basis of the British construction means that any major revisions of the received historical image of Tibet will be primarily due to the acceptance of a more balanced view of the aspirations of marginalised groups in Tibetan society. The British construction, however, perhaps tells us as much about British imperial history as it does about the Tibetans. While historically, Tibet clearly had a distinct identity and culture which they understood in Asian religious terms, these were translated into Western political terms in the light of British imperial concerns.

Later cadre officers and their support system followed Bell's definitions and assumed their readers' familiarity with his works. For example, Spencer Chapman suggested

that his readers might compare an illustration in his book with the same scene in an earlier work of Bell's, while Arthur Hopkinson, lecturing in 1950, stated that ‘I do not wish to waste your time by repeating facts of ancient history with which you are already familiar from books and articles, such as Sir Charles Bell's.’⁴¹

There was a skilful manipulation of the information presented to the public. The Dalai Lama's supreme authority was certainly undemocratic in Western eyes, but Gould's secretary, in best ‘spin-doctor’ mode, presented this in positive terms. He wrote that

Naturally there will always be some who from jealousy or other motives criticize one who has the strength of character to assume such autocratic power.⁴²

These descriptions of a well-ruled society – the common people, for example, were described in such terms as ‘extraordinarily friendly . . . always cheery’⁴³ – had a specific purpose. They created an impression of the Tibetans as worthy allies of the British.

The survival of these images has not, however, only been due to political factors. The affectionate descriptions of the Tibetan people did generally represent the cadre's real opinions, and their impressions have been confirmed by more recent travellers to Tibet. Few Europeans who have been there would dispute Hugh Richardson's statement that ‘all agree in describing the Tibetans as kind, gentle, honest, open and cheerful.’⁴⁴ Thus an image may be both ‘true’ and politically valuable.

The mystical image of Tibet also survives today largely as it serves Tibetan interests by emphasising the separate and unique nature of their civilisation. To an extent, it compensates for the fact that the Anglo-Tibetan alliance left the (now-exiled) Tibetan Government to rely on a historical image which they consider ‘incomplete’, particularly in the area of Tibet's political status.⁴⁵

In recent times, however, there has been a reaction against this mystical image by a younger generation of Tibetans and its benefits have been called into question. Increasingly, Tibetans from the Dalai Lama down have emphasised the long-term value of ‘truth’ over ‘image’.⁴⁶

The crucial difference between the image of Tibet presented by the cadre and the Tibetan Government-in-exile's view of themselves, is in the matter of independence. Bell's ultimate aim may well have been an independent Tibet, but as a very shrewd and far-sighted diplomat he stopped short of advocating Tibetan independence, while leading policy in a direction which could have made that result inevitable. The political requirements of wider British policy meant that the cadre could not present the ‘truth’ about independence as they understood it. By any practical definition, Tibet functioned as an independent state in the period 1913–1950. Cadre officers, who dealt with its government on a day-to-day basis, accepted that ‘Tibet is just as much entitled to her freedom as India’.⁴⁷

Whitehall's refusal to recognise Tibet as independent created a fundamental gap between the cadre's knowledge and the image which they were allowed to construct, but the cadre found that defining Tibet's status was an issue which could usually be avoided. Ultimately, although the cadre disagreed with Whitehall's views, they were government employees, and were duty-bound to follow orders. Clear statements of

support for Tibetan independence were generally given only after an officer had retired and was able to speak as an individual, rather than an official. As Hugh Richardson recently wrote,

In all practical matters the Tibetans were independent . . . [but] . . . The British Government . . . sold the Tibetans down the river . . . I was profoundly ashamed of the government.⁴⁸

Competing power structures produce different images, the ascendancy of which obviously depends upon subsequent political and social events. We cannot assume that the records of the subordinate powers involved in this process are 'true', and in opposition to dominant 'false' images. Each image contains elements of truth. There was no one, true, image of Tibet to be understood or 'discovered'. Each encounter produced different results, and different constructions by the powers involved.

Notes

[Editor's note: Original footnoting renumbered, abridged bibliography.]

* Bell 1924, p. 259.

- 1 See the various works by White, Bailey, Bell, Gould, Macdonald, O'Connor, Richardson and Younghusband listed in the bibliography.
- 2 Oriental and India Office Collection [hereafter OIOC] OIOC L/P&S/12/4605, India to India Office, 27 July 1942.
- 3 Anderson 1992, esp. pp. 113–19; Dreyfuss 1995, p. 205; Robb 1994, pp. 2–5; Smith 1986, esp. pp. 134–36.
- 4 For example, see Casinelli & Ekvall 1969; Ekvall 1960; Samuel 1994. Regarding the Sikkimese and Bhutanese enclaves, see Bray 1995, Dutta-Ray 1984, p. 42; Pranavananda 1983, pp. 81–82.
- 5 Regarding these social factors, see Snellgrove and Richardson 1968; Stein 1972.
- 6 Dreyfuss 1994, p. 210; Ekvall 1960. Dreyfuss's excellent essay examines the origin of this identity.
- 7 Bray 1993, p. 181; Tucci 1980, p. 111.
- 8 Bernard 1939, p. 120, quoting a telegram from the *Kashag* to himself; Goldstein 1989, p. 542, quoting the *Kashag* to Chang Kai-chek in 1946. Battye papers, (unpublished) 'Note on the present condition of Trade between Tibet and other countries' by Captain Battye, 28 April 1936.
- 9 Anderson 1992, p. 19. For further discussion of the Tibetan polity see, for example, Samuel 1993; Dreyfuss 1994.
- 10 Robb 1994, pp. 2–4.
- 11 *Ibid.* esp. p. 2. For a valuable discussion of the process by which South Asia's traditional frontiers were transformed into boundaries, see Embree 1977, pp. 255–80.
- 12 For example, the Chumbi was returned directly to the Tibetan Government in 1908, rather than to the Chinese authorities; OIOC L/P&S/7/210-602, Frontier Confidential Report, 14 February 1908.
- 13 Allen 1982, p. 201.
- 14 See, for example, Chandler 1905; Landon 1905; Ottley 1906.
- 15 Landon 1988, p. 107.
- 16 National Archives of India, New Delhi, [hereafter NAI] FD, 1910 External B, April 12–13, Military Report on Tibet, by Captain V. E. Gwyer. An attached file note states that this report was compiled with Bell's assistance. The report is also in OIOC L/Mil/17/14/92.
- 17 Bailey 1911; White 1909; Younghusband 1910.

- 18 O'Connor 1988, p. 352.
- 19 Bell 1987, pp. 65–66.
- 20 Anderson 1992, p. 179 fn.30, quoting a speech by Lord Curzon.
- 21 OIOC L/P&S/11/123-2400, Yatung Annual Report, 1916–17, cover note by Bell; L/P&S/11/79-2495, Gartok Annual Report, 1912–13; L/P&S/12/4166-3686, Yatung Annual Report, 1939–40.
- 22 OIOC L/P&S/7/249-1151, Gyantse Annual report 1910–11, cover note by Bell; Marshall & Williams 1982, pp. 2–3.
- 23 OIOC L/P&S/7/249-1151, Gyantse Annual Report, 1910–11, cover note by Bell; Normanton 1988, p. 122 quoting Richardson [no source given]; McKay 1992, p. 122, fn.13.
- 24 NAI FD, 1905 Secret E March 341–368, Gyantse diary of 18 December 1904; OIOC L/P&S/12/-4201-1863, Lhasa Mission report, week ending, 19 March 1944.
- 25 NAI FD, 1930 Estimate 45E 1–9, personal file of H. Martin; re Luff, see Bell 1987, pp. 97–99; OIOC MSS Eur F157–240, Norbu Dhondup to Bailey, 17 September 1929 & 30 September 1929; MSS Eur F157–241, Ludlow to Bailey, 3 September 1931; The most detailed account of Fox's career, perhaps significantly, is by an American, see Thomas 1950, pp. 284–288.
- 26 OIOC MSS Eur F157–214, O'Connor to Bailey, 22 June 1907.
- 27 Suyin 1977; OIOC MSS Eur F226/34, M. Worth, IPS Collection. Due to illness and age, Mr Worth was unfortunately unable to respond to my request to discuss his recollections in more detail; personal correspondence with Mrs Olga Worth, 22 August 1993.
- 28 Mainprice papers, diary entry of 22 July 1944.
- 29 Mainprice stayed on in Pakistan after 1947, but died of polio in Swat three years later; personal correspondence with Mrs Joan Mainprice, 28 April 1993; Mainprice papers, *passim*.
- 30 David-Neel 1927; Younghusband 1925.
- 31 OIOC MSS Eur F157–319, anonymous comments on (unpublished) manuscript by F. M. Bailey [original emphasis].
- 32 I have favoured the term 'mystic Tibet' here rather than the terms 'mythic Tibet' or 'mythos Tibet' to emphasise the fundamental attraction of mystical spiritual experiences associated with these exotic constructions of Tibet in the 20th century, although those alternative terms better embrace many older constructions including 'gold-digging ants', 'forbidden cities' and so on.
- 33 The seminal account of this process is by Bishop 1989.
- 34 Younghusband 1985, p. 2; Chapman 1992, p. 214.
- 35 Macdonald 1991, p. 201; OIOC MSS Eur F80 5h 2, unpublished manuscript by Bell entitled 'A Year in Lhasa' [apparently a draft autobiography, and unrelated to his (1924) article of that title], chapter three.
- 36 OIOC MSS Eur D979, Ludlow diary, various entries, 13 June 1926 to 1 August 1926, describes one such eccentric. Sven Hedin was one famous traveller who, after World War One, was considered undesirable on political grounds; see MSS Eur F157–221, Arthur Hirtzel to Bailey, 15 November 1922.
- 37 Sikkim State Archives, General 1916 (7)10/3/(XX11)/1916; David-Neel to Bell, 31 August 1916; here David-Neel describes herself as 'a loyal friend of England'.
- 38 OIOC L/P&S/12/4247, Gould to E. P. Donaldson (India Office), undated, cFebruary 1946.
- 39 Bell 1924, pp. 5, 126, 139, 140, 213–14, 269.
- 40 'Tibet: A Reading List', information sheet available from The Tibet Society of the U.K.
- 41 Hopkinson 1950, p. 230; Chapman 1992, pp. 178–79.
- 42 Chapman 1992, p. 194.
- 43 Macdonald 1991, p. 57.
- 44 Richardson 1984, p. 10.
- 45 [Author] Interview with H.H. the Dalai Lama, March 1994.
- 46 *Ibid.*; also see Shakya, 1992.
- 47 Bell 1987, p. 56.
- 48 'My Direct Experience of Independent Tibet 1936–49', by H. Richardson, information sheet available from The Tibet Society of the U.K.

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‘WE WANT A UNITED TIBET’

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FOREIGNER AT THE LAMA'S FEET

Donald S. Lopez, Jr.

Source: D. Lopez (ed.), *Curators of the Buddha: The Study of Buddhism under Colonialism*, Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1995, pp. 251–95.

When trying to photograph shy natives, it is well to conceal the fact that the real lens is pointing at them. A dummy lens fixed at the side of the camera and pointed away at right angles to the natives, will make them think that they are safe, the real lens being concealed by the hand until the last moment.

Notes and Queries on Anthropology, 1929 edition

The urgency of the last moment, the urgency of the hidden gaze directed at the natives while a blind eye is turned toward their site, the urgency for the control of representation will be considered here in an exploration of the relation between the Orientalist and the Tibetan lama. I take the term “Orientalist” in its weakest sense, as a professional expert on the Orient, recognizing, however, that the stronger connotations of the term occasioned by Said’s critique remain inevitably present. These connotations are particularly resonant in the case of the study of Tibetan Buddhism, which has gained status as a legitimate “field” within the western academy only in the last half of the present century. This status has been won in large part because of the effects of the Chinese invasion and occupation of Tibet (which began in 1950), precipitating the apparently urgent task of preserving traditional Tibetan culture, and what is regarded as its most precious legacy, Tibetan Buddhism, before its “loss.” This task has largely been assumed by the present generation of western scholars of Tibetan Buddhism, whose project of preservation has, for reasons to be explored below, brought them into relation with refugee Tibetan lamas, construed as the native conservators of an endangered archive.

It is this relation that will be explored here, a relationship of pronounced ambivalence. For the modern western scholar of Tibetan Buddhism is heir to the legacy of Orientalism described by Said, a legacy marked by a nostalgic longing and a revulsion. Buddhist Studies, like its parent Indology, has largely been a bibliophilic tradition, concerned above all with the collecting, editing, and translating of texts originating in an often ill-defined classical age, whose fluid borders exclude nothing but the present day. It has been the conviction of European (and later American) Orientalists that the classical age is forever lost, leaving them the task of the preservation and care of its remnants, most often in the form of textual and artistic artifacts; contemporary Asians have allowed this classical age to pass into near oblivion, and thereby have forfeited

their proprietary rights over its remains. Those rights were ceded, almost always through the process of colonial appropriation, to the Orientalist academy. Thus, the past of this Orient is regarded with nostalgia, the present with contempt.

These sentiments are very much at play in the case of Tibet, but with further ideological encrustations, many of which derive from the fact that Tibet never came under the direct colonial domination of a western power. Tibet was thus transformed into a particular focus of European desire and fantasy. The familiar nostalgia and revulsion were certainly present, for Tibet was coveted as the repository of lost Sanskrit manuscripts and their accurate Tibetan translations, preserved from the ravages of time. At the same time, with the European construction of "original Buddhism," the practices observed by European travelers and colonial officials positioned on the Tibetan periphery were deemed a repulsive corruption of the Buddha's rational teaching, polluted with demon worship and sacerdotalism to the point that it could no longer be accurately termed "Buddhism" at all, but became instead "Lamaism."

But persisting through the nineteenth and twentieth centuries was another fantasy, one which saw not just the texts preserved in Tibet but Tibetan Buddhist culture itself as an entity existing outside of time, set in its own eternal classical age in a lofty Himalayan keep. With the Chinese takeover of Tibet, this timeless culture was placed in profound jeopardy; there was the fear that exposure to time would cause its contents to wither, like the bodies of those who dare leave Shangri-la. Hence, there seemed to be an especial exigency about the preservation of Tibetan culture so rudely ushered into history, a task that seemed too important to be left to the exiled Tibetans alone. The confluence of ideologies that led to the repetition of this ostensibly unique imperative will be considered below, in part through a reflection on my own "fieldwork" as a graduate student in the late 1970s. In order to demonstrate that the notion of urgency about Tibet has itself a rather long history, I will begin by identifying several occasions in its evolution. It is not my intention to provide a history of the study of Tibetan Buddhism in the west, but rather to note in passing several emblematic moments in which foreigners positioned themselves before Tibetan lamas, sometimes standing, sometimes sitting, moments to which the present-day scholar of Tibetan Buddhism is inevitably heir.

Ippolito Desideri

The first Catholic priest to take up residence in Lhasa seems to have been the Jesuit priest Ippolito Desideri who arrived in the city on March 28, 1716. He remained there for five years until he received word from Rome that the mission-territory of Tibet had been removed from Jesuit jurisdiction and given to the Capuchins.¹ During his journey back to Italy, he began writing his *Notizie Istoriche del Thibet*, an account of his journey and of Tibetan religion and culture.² It is work imbued with missionary zeal. In the preface, he writes that Tibet's "Religion, founded on the Pythagorean system, and so entirely different from any other, deserves to be known in order to be contested. I flatter myself that these pages may induce the learned to confute this new mixture of superstitious errors, and move some to go to the assistance of that benighted nation."³ However, it is also the most systematic and detailed account of Tibetan Buddhist doctrine produced by a European before the twentieth century.

Despite his unconcealed motivation to confute the Tibetans' false religion and lead them to the true faith, Desideri enjoyed the patronage and friendship of Lha bzang Khan, the chieftain of the Khoshuud Mongols and self-proclaimed "King of Tibet." In the summer of 1717 Desideri received permission to take up residence at Se ra, a monastery of some 5,000 monks and one of the "three seats" of the dominant dGe lugs sect. There are a great many issues to be pursued concerning his study at Se ra, especially its importance for the composition of his magnum opus, a work in Tibetan of over 500 folios entitled *Questions on the Views of Rebirth and Emptiness, Offered by the White-headed Lama called Ippolito to the Scholars of Tibet*.⁴ Here, we will only pause to consider a passage from the *Notizie* in which he describes his studies at Se ra:

Occasionally I attended their public disputations, and above all I applied myself to study and really attempted to understand those most abstruse, subtle and intricate treatises they call Tongba-gni, or Vacuum, which are not to be taken in a material or philosophic, but in a mystical and intellectual sense; their real aim being to exclude and absolutely deny the existence of any uncreated and independent Being and thus effectually to do away with any conception of God. When I began to study these treatises the Doctor who had been appointed my Master declared that he could not explain them or make me understand them. Thinking this was only a pretext to prevent my gaining any real knowledge of such matters, I repeatedly entreated him to explain what I did not understand without help. Seeing that I was by no means convinced that he was so incapable and that, as he said, only some of the chief and most learned Lamás would be able to instruct me, he offered to bring other Doctors, declaring that he would be well pleased if I found any one who could throw light on these intricate and abstruse questions. In fact we both applied to several of the most esteemed Masters and Doctors and all gave me the same answer. I was, however, determined to try and find out the real meaning contained in these treatises, and seeing that human aid was of no avail, I prayed to God, the Father of Light, for whose glory alone I had undertaken this work, and again applied myself to solitary study. But I could discover nothing. Again I read most attentively, but with the same result. Persuaded, however, that *labor improbus omnia vincit*, with renewed courage I began at the beginning, carefully considering every word, but to no purpose. Briefly I continued my task until the dark clouds were pierced by a faint ray of light. This raised my hope of finally emerging into bright sunshine; I read, re-read and studied until, thanks be to God, I not only understood, but completely mastered (all Glory being to God) all the subtle, sophisticated, and abstruse matter which was so necessary and important for me to know.⁵

Desideri appears to have concluded that if he was to convert the Tibetans to Christianity, he must refute what they profess to be their most profound philosophical tenet, the doctrine of emptiness (*śūnyatā*, *stong pa nyid*). But in order to refute it, he must first understand it. He evinces a compelling need to reach this understanding, as if the entire success of his mission depended upon it and would be impeded until such understanding was gained. However, in order to come to an understanding, he finds himself in an ambivalent position before the Tibetan monastic scholars: he cannot

refute them until he understands their doctrine yet he cannot understand their doctrine without their instruction. That is, he has his own pressing agenda to pursue which cannot succeed without the aid of his perceived opponents. This ambivalence of the European before the lama would continue in the centuries that followed.

Desideri is initially impeded by the reluctance of the *geshes* (*dge bshes*, the highest scholastic degree of the Tibetan monastic academy) of Se ra to explain the doctrine of emptiness to him. Since their professed inability to do so appears highly suspect in light of the traditions of dGe lugs scholasticism, with its technical vocabulary for the discussion of the ultimate, one must seek other motives. A scriptural motivation is available among the bodhisattva vows that all *geshes* hold, where they are enjoined against “teaching emptiness to the untrained” (*ma sbyangs stong nyid bstan*), generally interpreted to mean that the doctrine of emptiness should not be taught to those who might be frightened by it. But Desideri had been admitted to the monastery by the order of Lha bzang Khan, a Mongol regarded with a certain opprobrium by the Tibetans for deposing the sixth Dalai Lama and dispatching him on his fatal journey to the Manchu court. The Khan was himself overthrown and killed by a rival Mongol tribe in the very year that Desideri moved to Se ra. A more practical motivation would then seem to be the *geshes*' wish to prevent the foreign polemicist, whose patron had usurped the Dalai Lama's throne, from understanding what they considered their most unassailable philosophical position.

Frustrated by the reluctance of his hosts, Desideri appeals to his own god and is eventually rewarded. However, it is noteworthy that the rhetoric of discovery which he employs here may not reflect his own “experience” but could just as well have come from one of the works on emptiness provided by his hosts, an early instance of the process by which the rhetoric of the Orientalist is shaped by that of his “subject.” The work is called “Praise of Dependent Origination” (*rTen 'brel stod pa*), a paean to the doctrine of emptiness written by the “founder” of the dGe lugs sect, Tsong kha pa (1357–1419). Toward the end of this famous (and commonly memorized) work, Tsong kha pa writes:

People who do not comprehend how wondrous is this good teaching become utterly agitated, like grass. When I discerned this, I tried many times, following scholars, seeking again and again [to know] your [i.e., the Buddha's] intention. After studying many texts of our own sect and those of others, my mind was tormented by webs of doubt. You prophesied that the texts of Nāgārjuna, a garden of jasmine, would explain how your unsurpassed vehicle abandons the extremes of existence and non-existence. [They are] a vast maṇḍala of stainless wisdom moving unimpeded through the sky of scriptures, eradicating the darkness at the heart of extreme views, outshining the constellations of mistaken philosophers, illuminated by a wreath of white light, the eloquent explanations of the glorious moon [Candrakīrti]. When I discerned this through the kindness of my lama, my mind found rest.⁶

Here, as with Desideri's account, we find a sense of despair at the profound difficulty of the doctrine of emptiness and the compulsion to understand it, a report of earnest endeavor, studying many texts with many masters, and, finally, images of illumination and understanding attained through the grace of the divine teacher.

But the work of Father Desideri was soon forgotten, in large part due to the disarray produced in the Jesuit archives as a result of the suppression of the Jesuits from 1773–1814 under Pius VI and VII, remaining unknown until the present century. In 1754 the Capuchin mission in Lhasa was closed. In 1793 the Manchu emperor decreed imperial control over Tibetan communication with foreign countries, serving thereby to close the frontiers. From this point and until the present day, further relations of Europeans with the lamas would be positioned at the borderlands.

Alexander Csoma de Kőrös

Concurrent with the rise of the bourgeois class in Europe and the concomitant rise of nationalism during the eighteenth century was an increased interest in and promotion of national languages and literatures, and an attendant deemphasis of Latin. At the same time, the science of philology postulated the existence of linguistic families and lineages, searching ever for the source from which all languages had sprung. These trends also touched Hungary. But Hungarian was not a Germanic language or a Slavic language, like those of its neighbors, nor was it a Romance language. The consensus among Hungarian scholars of the day who speculated about the origin of the Hungarian people and their language was to look east, to the Huns and the Avars, perhaps to the Turks. A Transylvanian with an obvious talent for languages (he is said to have learned seventeen), Alexander Csoma de Kőrös (1784–1842) took it as his task to “discover the obscure origins of our homeland.” In late 1819 he set out on his quest, arriving in Teheran a year later. From his studies of Arabic sources, he became convinced that the ancient homeland of his ancestors was to be found among the Uighurs in the Tarim Basin of modern Xinjiang, an area then called Bokhara. Toward that destination, he traveled through Afghanistan and the Punjab, arriving in Kashmir in 1822. He spent the next year traveling back and forth between Srinagar and Leh, the capital of Ladakh, searching in vain for a caravan he could join for the journey to Yarkand. It was on one of these trips that he chanced to meet a European, traveling alone in the opposite direction. This was Dr. William Moorcroft, a veterinarian officially serving as “Superintendent of the East India Company’s stud-farm on mission to Upper Asia” but also an explorer who seems to have functioned as a self-appointed spy for the British government. He observed the political situation in the small Himalayan states bordering British India, reporting and, if possible, thwarting any contacts they may have with Russia, an early player in “the great game.”⁷ Moorcroft convinced Csoma de Kőrös to delay his search for the source of the Hungarian language in order to learn Tibetan; he wrote that “a knowledge of the language alone is an acquisition not without a certain commercial, or possibly, political Value.”⁸ They agreed that this could be accomplished after a year in Tibet preceded by a year of Csoma studying Tibetan on his own in Srinagar.

He arrived in Ladakh in June 1823 where he began to study under the tutelage of a lama recommended by Moorcroft. Csoma de Kőrös worked on the project for the next seven years in a variety of locations along the southwestern borders of Tibet, sometimes with the lama, sometimes alone, “disappointed in my attentions by the indolence and negligence of that Lama,”⁹ sometimes with a British stipend, sometimes without resources. During this time, he fulfilled what he termed his “heavy obligations to the [British] Government [of India]” producing a Tibetan-English dictionary,

a grammar of the Tibetan language, and an English translation of the great ninth-century compendium of Buddhist terminology, the *Mahāvvyutpatti*. Beyond this remarkable work, as Max Müller observed in 1862, “Such a jungle of religious literature – the most excellent hiding-place we should think, for Lamas and Dalai-Lamas – was too much even for a man who could travel on foot from Hungary to Thibet.”¹⁰ In 1830 he left Tibet for Calcutta, where he published these works and numerous articles on Tibetan Buddhist literature under the auspices of the *Journal of the Asiatic Society of Bengal*.¹¹ In the preface to the dictionary, he wrote poignantly:

Though the study of the Tibetan languages did not form part of the original plan of the author, but was only suggested after he had been by Providence led into Tibet, and had enjoyed an opportunity, by the liberal assistance of the late Mr. Moorcroft, to learn of what sort and origin the Tibetan literature was, he cheerfully engaged in the acquirement of more authentic information upon the same, hoping that it might serve him as a vehicle to his immediate purpose; namely, his researches respecting the origin and language of the Hungarians. . . . After being familiarized with the terminology, spirit, and general contents of the Buddhistic works in Tibetan translations, the author of this Dictionary estimates himself happy in having thus found an easy access to the whole Sanscrit literature, which of late has become so favorite a study of the whole learned Europe. To his own nation he feels a pride in announcing, that the study of the Sanscrit will be more satisfactory, than to any other people in Europe. The Hungarians will find a fund of information from its study, respecting their origin, manners, customs, and language; since the structure of Sanscrit (as also of other Indian dialects) is most analogous to the Hungarian, while it greatly differs from that of the languages of occidental Europe.¹²

But further studies in Sanskrit and Bengali convinced him that he was wrong. In 1842, he set off from Calcutta to travel to Sikkim, planning then to proceed through Lhasa to his long-postponed destination, the Tarim Basin. He died of malaria in Darjeeling.¹³

His chance meeting with Moorcroft had deferred him from his quest for the origins of his culture but had led him to embark on studies that had as their effect a different kind of procreation; Csoma de Kőrös is today known as the “Father of Tibetology.” Indeed, in recognition of his role in the discovery of Tibetan Buddhism, Csoma de Kőrös was officially recognized as a bodhisattva by Taishō University in Japan in 1933.¹⁴

If we find in Csoma de Kőrös the moment of origin of the academic study of Tibet, he was nonetheless what Said would call “a gifted amateur enthusiast,” working not in a European university, but in “the field,” in this case in various sites along the Tibetan border but never in Lhasa, with, it appears, only the grudging cooperation of a lama. The coincidence of the interests of nationalism, represented by Csoma de Kőrös’s search for Hungarian origins, and of empire, represented by Moorcroft’s conviction that a knowledge of Tibetan language would prove of value to the British, resulted in the creation of a science and a profession called “Tibetology,” for by the mid-nineteenth century, the center of Oriental studies had moved from the Orient to the universities of Europe.¹⁵

The European scholars of Buddhism, well-trained in Greek and Latin, created their own version of “classical Buddhism” derived from evaluating the Sanskrit and Pāli texts they studied for their relative proximity to the founder.¹⁶ Very few of these scholars ever traveled to Asia during their careers: it was not necessary since they had Buddhism in their libraries. It was against this textually crafted classical Indian Buddhism, now conveniently dead and thus not present to contest European knowledge, that the Buddhisms of Asia, of Sri Lanka, China, and Japan were judged to be derivative, deficient, and degenerate, their adherents unreliable interpreters, unworthy descendants, unqualified bearers of the Buddha’s noble truth, now passed to the scholars of Europe. Tibet, the blank place on the map between India and China, was officially declared closed to foreigners by decree of the Manchu emperor Qianlong in 1793 after a war with the Gurkhas, and unlike India, Southeast Asia, China, and Japan, never came under the domination (above all in the epistemological sense) of the European colonial powers. Yet Tibet was to have its own ambivalent position in the European creation of Buddhism.

L. Austine Waddell

L. Austine Waddell, another gifted amateur, gathered a great deal of information on Tibetan Buddhism, especially on ritual practice and popular belief, from his post as a British functionary in Sikkim from 1885 to 1895, which he published in *The Buddhism of Tibet, or Lamaism*. In the preface of that work, Waddell reports that he was able to gain such a wealth of information by purchasing “a Lamaist temple with its fittings” in Darjeeling and then having the officiants explain to him the rites which he paid them to perform. He was further able to learn their “secrets” by allowing the monks and lamas of Sikkim to believe that he was the fulfillment of a prophecy that an incarnation of the buddha Amitabha would come from the west.¹⁷ This recurrent trope of the colonial conqueror, reminiscent of Cortés and Captain Cook, allowed Waddell a double claim to superiority: on the one hand, he was an emanation of the Buddha of Infinite Light; on the other, he understood, better than the credulous monks and lamas, that he was not.¹⁸ Thus, although he spent most of his career on the border of Tibet, longing to enter Lhasa, the center, he nonetheless adopted a posture of both control over and contempt for his informants and secured his authority by allowing the lamas to believe that he was ultimately one of them. With the confidence of the Tibetans secured via their incorporation of him into their pantheon, Waddell establishes his distance from them by confiding his deception to his European audience. His authority over Tibetan Buddhism is constructed by allowing the Tibetans to believe that he is a Buddhist (even a buddha) while assuring his European readers that he is not.¹⁹

Unlike Desideri and Csoma de Kőrös, Waddell wrote in a time when the Orientalist enterprise was in full flower. He does not attempt, as they do, to describe the pieces of what remains a great puzzle, in an effort to arrive at a coherent picture of Tibetan Buddhism. For Waddell, the picture is clear and his rhetoric is one of comprehension, locating Tibetan Buddhism within the master narrative of the history of Buddhism. Although himself another amateur, he was heir to the commonly held view of European professional Orientalists in which the Buddhism of Tibet figured prominently as the end point in the Victorian vision of the history of Buddhism: after the early

centuries of the brotherhood, Buddhism in India followed a course of uninterrupted degeneration from its origins as a rational, agnostic faith, free of all superstition and ritual. With the rise of the Mahāyāna, the agnostic idealism and simple morality of primitive Buddhism was replaced by "a speculative theistic system with a mysticism of sophistic nihilism." Yet another degeneration occurred with the rise of the Yogācāra, which, for reasons that remain unclear, was regarded with particular antipathy. "And this Yoga parasite, containing within itself the germs of Tantrism, seized strong hold of its host and soon developed its monster outgrowths, which crushed and cankered most of the little life of purely Buddhist stock yet left in the Mahāyāna."²⁰ Were this not enough, the progress of the contamination continued as the pure essence of primitive Buddhism was once more polluted in India with the rise of tantrism.

It was this mere shadow of original Buddhism that was belatedly transmitted to Tibet, where it was further adulterated with the demon worship of the Tibetans: "The Lamaist cults comprise much deep-rooted devil-worship, which I describe in some fullness. For Lamaism is only thinly and imperfectly varnished over with Buddhist symbolism, beneath which the sinister growth of poly-demonist superstition darkly appears."²¹ For Waddell most Tibetan Buddhist practice was contemptible mummery and Tibetan Buddhist literature was "for the most part a dreary wilderness of words and antiquated rubbish, but the Lamas conceitedly believe that all knowledge is locked up in their musty classics, outside which nothing is worthy of serious notice."²² Lamaism thus stands at the nadir of a long process of contamination and degeneration from the origin. (Waddell conducted his researches while serving as assistant sanitary commissioner for the Darjeeling district and in 1889 had published, "Are Venomous Snakes Autotoxic?" in the *Scientific Memoirs by Medical Officers of the Army of India*.)

Tibetan Buddhism is thus regarded by Waddell as doubly other in a complex play of Orientalist ideologies: with the discovery and translation of Sanskrit and Pāli texts, Buddhism is invented and controlled by the west as the other of Romantic Orientalism, which saw Europe's spiritual salvation in the wisdom of the east. This other was called "original Buddhism," represented as a "religion of reason" in Victorian Britain. Western Buddhologists became the true and legitimate conservators of this "classical tradition." Tibetan Buddhism then is constructed as the other of this other ("original Buddhism"). It is a product not of the religion of reason but of degenerations of the Indian textual tradition, namely, the Mahāyāna and tantra. There is thus a nexus of forces brought to bear to create degenerate Tibetan Buddhism or, more properly, "Lamaism." Like many before and after him, Waddell compares this Lamaism to Roman Catholicism as a further strategy of condemnation, where "Lamaism" becomes a substitute for "Papism." The Tibetans, having lost the spirit of primitive Buddhism, now suffer under the oppression of sacerdotalism and the exploitation of its priests, something that England had long since thrown off. But it is not simply a case of analogy: Pāli Buddhism is to Tibetan Buddhism as the Anglican Church is to Roman Catholicism. It is rather a strategy of debasing the distant and yet unsubjected other by comparing it to the near and long-subjugated other, subjugated both by its relegation to England's past and to England's present European rivals and Irish subjects.²³

We find in Waddell a mixing of center-periphery discourse, of metaphors of surfaces and essences, of origins and evolutes. Sometimes Buddhism is just a veneer crudely applied to Tibetan demon worship. Elsewhere, the essence of primitive

Buddhism lies obscured beneath the layers of Tibetan idolatry. There are rare moments when Waddell concedes the civilizing influence that Buddhism has had on the Tibetans. “And it is somewhat satisfactory to find,” he writes, “that many of the superior Lamas breathe much of the spirit of the original system.” Despite his obvious contempt, Waddell believes that there is something in Tibet, possessed by the heathens, which is not yet his and his alone, although he possesses more than any other European. For him, the Buddhism of Tibet still preserves “much of the loftier philosophy and ethics of the system taught by the Buddha himself. And the Lamas have the keys to unlock the meaning of much of Buddha’s doctrine, which has been almost inaccessible to Europeans.”²⁴

This obsession with the interior is evident in his impatient desire to reach Lhasa. In the preface to *The Buddhism of Tibet, or Lamaism*, a book researched for the most part in Sikkim ten years before the Younghusband expedition, he describes his qualifications for writing the book. “Being one of the few Europeans who have entered the territory of the Grand Lama, I have spent several years in studying the actualities of Lamaism as explained by its priests, at points much nearer Lhasa than any utilized for such a purpose, and where I could feel the pulse of the sacred city itself beating in the large communities of its natives, many of whom had left Lhasa only ten or twelve days previously.”²⁵ Waddell had tried to enter Tibet disguised as a Tibetan pilgrim in 1892, with surveying instruments hidden in his prayer wheel, but was turned back. In 1904 he finally reached the forbidden city, no longer disguised as a Buddhist pilgrim or pretending to be an incarnation of Amitibha, but in the uniform of a British colonel. He was the chief medical officer of Younghusband’s expeditionary force, which left at least one thousand Tibetans dead before it achieved its purpose of securing a trade agreement with Britain. In his long account of the campaign, *Lhasa and Its Mysteries*, published in 1905, Waddell was unable to resist including an appendix in which he listed how close other recent European travelers had gotten to the holy city (Rockhill, 110 miles; Captain Bower, 200 miles; Miss A. Taylor, twelve days’ journey), implying, of course, that unlike them, he had reached his destination.

We see here the playing out of the relationship between the top and the bottom, in which the dominant member of a hierarchy (in this case Britain) attempts to eliminate the subordinate member, the other (in this case Tibet), for reasons of prestige and status but cannot because it is ultimately dependent on the other for that status. Thus, Waddell wants to dismiss Tibetan Buddhism as Lamaism, a degeneration of the “original Buddhism” which he controls. But he cannot dismiss it because it is precisely the existence of Tibetan Buddhism which makes his “original Buddhism” somehow original. Rather than eliminating the bottom outright, the other becomes incorporated symbolically into the top as a primary, often eroticized, component of its fantasy life.²⁶ This seems to occur for Waddell in his gnawing suspicion that the Tibetans indeed possess some secret understanding of Buddhism which he lacks.

It is also evident in his attitude toward uncolonized Tibet, which he seems to have regarded from the Sikkimese border in 1898 as a tempting seductress resisting his attempts at penetration, and which he portrayed in 1905 as his deflowered and debased conquest when he finally reached Lhasa with Younghusband. That which he was felt driven to reach when he stood at the border could be dismissed with contempt when he stood at the center, an officer of the army that had put the Grand Lama himself to flight:

Wreathed in the romance of centuries, Lhasa, the secret citadel of the “undying” Grand Lama, has stood shrouded in impenetrable mystery on the Roof-of-the-World, alluring yet defying our most adventurous travelers to enter her closed gates. With all the fascination of an unsolved enigma, this mysterious city has held the imagination captive, as one of the last of the secret places of the earth, as the Mecca of East Asia, the sacerdotal city where the “Living Buddha,” enthroned as a god, reigns eternally over his empire of tonsured monks, weaving ropes of sand like the schoolmen of old, or placidly twirling their prayer-wheels, droning their mystic spells and exorcising devils in the intervals of their dreamy meditations. But now, in the fateful Tibetan Year of the Wood-Dragon [1904], the fairy Prince of “Civilisation” has roused her from her slumbers, her closed doors are broken down, her dark veil of mystery is lifted up, and the long-sealed shrine, with its grotesque cults and its idolised Grand Lama, shorn of his sham nimbus, have yielded up their secrets and lie disenchanting before our Western eyes.²⁷

He ends his account of the British invasion of Tibet by proclaiming that, rather than burying Tibetan Buddhism as a decadent cult, it is the mission of England “to herald the rise of new star in the East, which may for long, perhaps for centuries, diffuse its mild radiance over this charming land and interesting people.”²⁸ Despite Waddell’s hopes, Tibet was never to come under the colonial domain of Britain. Nonetheless, he was able to construct in his representation of Lamaism an ideological dominion over Tibet that would have served as the necessary prerequisite for British colonial rule. It is not coincidental that many of the same characterizations of Tibetan Buddhism appear in Chinese discourse of the last four decades, serving as a justification to the west for the process of invasion, occupation, and colonization of Tibet by China.

Tibet in exile

The invasion and occupation of Tibet by the People’s Liberation Army in 1950 and the Tibetan uprising and subsequent flight of the Dalai Lama to India in 1959 were to bring, beyond the devastation suffered by the Tibetans, significant shifts in the western construction of Tibetan Buddhism. Of the approximately 70,000 Tibetans who successfully followed the Dalai Lama into exile in 1959 and 1960, an estimated 5,000–7,000 were monks, a tiny fraction (perhaps 5 per-cent) of the monastic population of Tibet. In 1974 attempts were begun to reestablish the three great dGe lugs pa monasteries (Drepung, Sera, and Ganden) in India. The government of India had been reluctant to have the by then roughly 100,000 Tibetan refugees settle in a single location, preferring instead to provide them with tracts of unwanted land spread throughout the subcontinent. Tibetan laypeople had already done some initial work of clearing the jungle when the monks moved south. Drepung (‘Bras spungs) and Ganden (dGa’ ldan) were reestablished about three miles apart in northern Karnataka. The new Sera (Se ra) was built further south, near the city of Mysore. The monasteries were built in the midst of farming settlements of Tibetan refugees under the administration of the Department of Rehabilitation of the Home Ministry of the government of India and were declared off-limits to foreign visitors. Under this system, Ganden was known as Lama Camp 1, and Drepung as Lama Camp 2. In the early years, the

situation was quite difficult, with the monks living in tents, spending their days clearing jungle land to make cornfields.

The monasteries found themselves in a new position. The monastic rules had forbidden monks to cultivate the earth, ostensibly to prevent the accidental killing of insects. In Tibet the monasteries had been major property owners, employing tenant farmers to cultivate fields of barley. But in south India Tibetan Buddhist monks were pulling plows and later driving tractors, assigned to take their turn at sitting up all night in the fields, ready to beat on drums and gongs to drive away the elephants that ravaged their cornfields. By 1980, Drepung, Ganden, and Sera had each built temples, assembly halls, and quarters for approximately three hundred monks. At each monastery about one hundred monks had come from Tibet, the other two hundred were boys between the ages of eight and eighteen drawn from the local refugee communities. In exile the role of the monastery inevitably changed. The monasteries were no longer rich and powerful institutions whose influence was feared by the Dalai Lama himself. They no longer enjoyed government support nor the donations of wealthy lay patrons. There was no shortage of new monks; the refugee families were happy to enroll their sons in the local monastery where they would be educated, clothed, and housed, and could still come home on weekends. But unlike Tibet, where it was expected that one became a monk for life, young men only became novices, often renouncing their vows before full ordination on their parent's advice, returning to lay life to work on the farm. The great monasteries were becoming, in effect, boarding schools.

The Tibetan diaspora also initiated a new period in the history of the study of Tibetan Buddhism in the west. In the 1960s, scholars from European universities, such as Herbert V. Guenther and David Seyfort Rugg, traveled to India to work with refugee Tibetan scholars in the translation of Buddhist texts. Popular interest in the exotic world of Tibetan Buddhism also boomed as Evans-Wentz's 1927 rendering of a Tibetan text he dubbed *The Tibetan Book of the Dead* became part of the LSD canon and Dharamsala became an obligatory stop on the Asian pilgrimage. In 1964, Robert Thurman became the first westerner to be ordained as a Buddhist monk of the Tibetan Buddhist tradition. Many other European and American men and women soon went forth as well. In 1961 the first doctoral program in Buddhist Studies in Europe or North America was established at the University of Wisconsin and by 1975 there were tenured scholars of Tibetan Buddhism at Columbia University, the University of Washington, and the University of Virginia, where graduate students received government fellowships to study the Tibetan language under the auspices of the National Defense Education Act.

At the same time, the U.S. Library of Congress was sponsoring the publication of thousands of heretofore unknown Tibetan texts, under the direction of the redoubtable E. Gene Smith. Autochthonous Tibetan works published by the refugees accumulated in depository libraries across the United States as a result of Public Law 480, under the terms of which the huge debts owed by the government of India to the United States for shipments of American wheat provided for famine relief would be repaid in the form of books. Specifically, a designated number of copies of every book published in India was to be provided to the Library of Congress, which would then distribute them to the depository libraries. In this way, the long mysterious Tibetan archive became as if magically manifest in the racks of American university libraries.

There was constant reference during this period to the present perilous state and how it differed from "pre-1959 Tibet." The change was indeed profound. Although Lhasa had been occupied by foreign armies before and the previous Dalai Lama had gone into exile to escape foreign troops, sometimes British and sometimes Chinese, this was the longest exile of a Dalai Lama from Tibet and the damage done to Buddhist institutions in Tibet was far greater than any in history. Drastic changes had occurred and yet the reactions they elicited in western students of Tibetan Buddhism are not to be explained simply by taking account of the events of the day; it was not simply the fact of change that brought forth such reactions.²⁹

The story is told in a Buddhist sūtra of a lone blind tortoise who dwells in the depths of a vast ocean, coming up for air only once every hundred years. On the surface of that same ocean floats a golden yoke. It is more common for that tortoise to place its head through that yoke when it takes its centennial breath, the sūtra says, than it is for a being imprisoned in the cycle of rebirth to be born as a human with the good fortune to encounter the teaching of the Buddha. Human birth in a Buddhist land is compared to a rare jewel, difficult to find and, if found, of great value, because it is in the human body that one may traverse the path that leads to liberation. Western students of Buddhism imbibed this rhetoric of urgency from the Buddhist texts they studied. This attempt to partake of Buddhist notions marked a new phase in the history of western urgency about Tibet. Here, unlike with Desideri or Waddell, the aim of study is not to defeat Tibetan Buddhism in ideological battle; instead, Buddhist doctrine is sympathetically regarded as valuable because of its salvific powers for the modern world, its own myths enlisted in the crusade for its preservation. In the Buddhist texts there is continual reference to the precious rarity of rebirth as a human and the need to take full advantage of this lifetime by "extracting its essence," to find the dharma and put it into practice before one is destroyed by inevitable but unpredictable death and reborn in less fortunate circumstances.

There was also the traditional doctrine of the decline of the dharma that had been invoked in Buddhist societies throughout Asia for two millennia. It had been proclaimed that the world had passed into an age of degeneration during which all Buddhist scriptures would disappear from the world, with the only recourse being the special teaching of the sect that delivers the ominous proclamation. In the last stages of degeneration all Buddhist texts will disappear, the saffron robes of the monks will turn white (the color of the robes of the laymen), and, in the end, all of the relics of the cremated Buddha – the teeth, the bones, the fingernails, the hair – will break free from their reliquaries, the stūpas and pagodas, and magically travel to Bodhgaya where they will reassemble beneath the tree where the Buddha achieved enlightenment. There they will be worshiped one last time by the gods before they burst into flames and vanish.³⁰

At the same time, a variety of western myths of Tibet were at play. One of these derived from the historical fact that Tibet preserved, in translation, the largest corpus of Indian Buddhist literature in the world. But this corpus, the famous *bKa' 'gyur* and *bsTan 'gyur*, was not kept only in Tibet. In 1829 Brian Houghton Hodgson, British resident at the Court of Nepal, acquired a complete set of block prints and deposited them at the East Indian Company's College of Fort William. The Peking edition of the Tibetan canon had been published in Japan in 1956 and was widely available in the west. More potent was the promise of long-unknown "indigenous Tibetan literature"

with its potential to bring the newly founded area of Tibetan Buddhist Studies from the margin. Tibet existed on the periphery of the two great civilizations of Asia, and was regarded as peripheral by both. For the Indians it was a distant place across the mountains, beyond Mount Kailash, where the Buddhist paṇḍitas fled from Muslim invaders. For the Chinese it was a barbaric place, whose religion was not Buddhism but *lama jiao*, the source of the problematic term “Lamaism.” The Tibetans had accurate translations of the Sanskrit texts, the originals of which had been long lost. But Tibetan Buddhism was not considered one of the major streams of Buddhist thought in its own right; rather, its adherents were reduced to the role of custodians in their lofty preserve, their own practice generally either condemned as the product of a complex process of degeneration, as in the opinion of Waddell, or exalted as the ethereal dwelling place of the telepathic mahatmas, preservers of Atlantean wisdom for the postdiluvian age, as was the view of the Theosophists. Reflecting on his 1948 travels in Tibet, Giuseppe Tucci, the most eminent Tibetologist of this century, wrote, “In Tibet man had not yet disintegrated; he still sank his roots fully into that collective subconscious which knows no difference between past and present.”³¹

This perspective began to change after the diaspora of 1959, with a more historically based variation on the Theosophical theme. The view of Tibet as a closed society that had so fascinated and vexed European travelers in the colonial period now was represented as a reason Tibetan Buddhism was more authentic than any other. Tibet had never been colonized as had India and Southeast Asia, had never been “opened” to the west as had China and Japan, had never suffered a revolution as had occurred in China in 1911 and 1949, and had never attempted to adopt western ways, as had Japan since the Meiji. Rather, Tibet was seen to have resisted all foreign influence, with the monasteries forcing the thirteenth Dalai Lama to close down the English-language school in Lhasa, to abandon his plans to train a modern army, to discourage the introduction of European sports by proclaiming that he who kicks a soccer ball kicks the head of the Buddha.

All of this meant that the Buddhism of Tibet was pure and this purity derived in large part from a connection with the origin that the Tibetans themselves often invoked. Like other Buddhist traditions, the Tibetans based claims to authority largely on lineage, and in their case, they claimed that the Buddhism taught in Tibet in 1959 could be traced backward in an unbroken line to the eleventh century, when the founders of the major Tibetan sects made the perilous journey to India to receive the dharma from the great masters of Bengal, Bihar, and Kashmir, who were themselves direct recipients of teachings that could be traced back to the Buddha himself. Moreover, this lineage was represented as essentially oral, with instructions being passed down from master to disciple as unwritten commentary on sacred text. Significantly, many of these Tibetan travelers of the eleventh and twelfth centuries had also been translators. Now that lineage was in danger of extinction. There was something apocalyptic about it, as if the Tibetans, long conservators of timeless wisdom in a timeless realm, had been brutally thrust from their snowy sanctuary into history, where time was coming to an end and with it, their wisdom. For the oral tradition not to be lost, locked within the minds of aged and dying refugee lamas, it had to be passed on, and there seemed to be few Tibetans willing or able to take on the task. Those left in Tibet, where the Chinese commissar had turned on the Buddhist yogi,³² seemed lost, while those in India were having to cope with the body blows of modernity, moving, as was

often noted, from a country which even in the twentieth century only had wheels of dharma and wheels of protection, but no wheels on wagons, multiple metaphoric vehicles to liberation, but no carts.³³ If this were not enough, the young Tibetans appeared to be losing interest in their religion, seduced by materialism, nationalism, and rock music. There seemed to be only one group ready for the task: American graduate students.

Answering the call

There occurred then a rather strange confluence of a Tibetan Buddhist hegemony, now made more manifest in exile, and the ideology of the nouveau Buddhologists from Europe and America.³⁴ These were the circumstances at the time that I began graduate studies in Tibetan Buddhism at the University of Virginia in 1974. In 1977 I began plans for my dissertation, which was to be a study of an Indian school of Madhyamaka philosophy, drawn largely from seventeenth- and eighteenth-century Tibetan doxographies. In the course of my research, I came to participate in a variety of myths, some Tibetan, some western, about Tibet and Tibetan Buddhism, the observation of which occurs only in retrospect.

It was a requirement for the Ph.D. in Buddhist Studies at the University of Virginia that graduate students do what was called "fieldwork." Even if it had been possible to go to Tibet, there seemed to be little point: most of the monasteries had been destroyed and the remaining monks laicized during the Cultural Revolution. One would go instead to India, where the refugee lamas resided, thus imitating the travels of the eleventh-century Tibetans who left their homeland for the journey to India, where they received teachings and gathered texts. We also would journey to India, not to study with Indians, who had lost their Buddhism long ago, but with Tibetans, who had tragically been displaced from the land where Buddhism had been preserved to the land where Buddhism had been born.

As Desideri found it imperative that he understand emptiness so that he might convert the Tibetans, as Csoma de Kőrös was pressed to find the source of the Hungarian language, as Waddell felt compelled to cross the border and enter Lhasa, so there seemed a certain urgency about my studies: the need to learn to read and speak Tibetan as quickly as possible so that I might participate in the preservation of Tibetan culture, a culture that was in danger of extinction. The urgencies of Desideri, of Csoma de Kőrös, of Waddell, and myself were not merely coincidental or even just imitative of one another; they were constituents of a genealogy of urgency that shared a common referent, marked by the term "Tibet," a threatened abode of western construction, a fragile site of origin and preserve, still regarded from the periphery as a timeless center, still perceived with simultaneous nostalgia and contempt. There was nostalgia for the already lost secrets of Tibetan Buddhism. And there was a patronizing contempt for the exiled Tibetans as custodians unequal to the task of preserving their own culture without our help. That they were perceived as inadequate caretakers of that culture derives not so much from the difficult times in which they found themselves as from the fact that the culture they were charged to preserve was not of their making, but of ours.

It was known that the three great seats of the dGe lugs sect had been reestablished in south India and that many of the great scholars were there, but no one had gone

there to study yet. My adviser had worked with a number of Tibetan scholars in writing his own dissertation, most of whom were associated with the Gomang (sGo mang) College of Drepung monastery. This was then my lineage as well and I chose a seventeenth-century work by the most famous scholar of that college to serve as the basis of my dissertation, and I determined to study it under the tutelage of the greatest expert on the text among the refugee community, who was then serving as the abbot of Gomang College, relocated in south India.

My interest, like that of other graduate students, was not in the more mundane expressions of Tibetan Buddhist practice, nor in its institutions, nor its history. It was rather in what we called philosophy, the product of a long tradition of dGe lugs scholasticism and the content of training in the storied geshe curriculum. The scholastic curriculum took approximately twenty years to complete and was built around the systematic study of five Indian texts. These texts, dealing with such subjects as logic, cosmology, epistemology, monastic discipline, and the structure of the paths to enlightenment, were committed to memory. It was not uncommon for a scholar who had completed the curriculum to have committed several thousand pages of these texts and their commentaries to memory. The geshe (*dge bshes*), as the monks who successfully completed the curriculum were known, were believed to possess an insight into the most profound topics of Buddhist thought and it was this insight that was in danger of disappearing. It was this knowledge that I sought to capture, keep, and preserve for the world before it was too late. This seemed at the time a noble task, far nobler than, for example, studying the kinds of rituals of blessings and exorcism that Waddell had cataloged, whose description would only tend to reinforce the view that Tibetan Buddhism is obsessed with magic. It seemed preferable to focus on those works that would legitimate Tibetan Buddhism, showing that it, too, had philosophy, a philosophy which, unlike its more mundane rituals, was not culturally determined, but which deserved to be placed alongside or even above the classics of the west for its profound insights into the perennial questions.

This was the task; the method was translation. Translation not of the words, which presumably could have been accomplished without leaving the comforts of America, but translation of the meaning, enhanced and supplemented with the lama's oral commentary. But my purpose was very different from that of Orientalists of the previous century, as Max Müller had described them in 1862:

Sanskrit scholars resident in India enjoy considerable advantages over those who devote themselves to the study of the ancient literature of the Brahmans in this country, or in France and Germany . . . [T]here are few large towns in which we do not meet with some more or less learned natives. . . . These men, who formerly lived on the liberality of the Rajahs and on the superstition of the people, find it more and more difficult to make a living among their own countrymen, and are glad to be employed by any civilian or office who takes an interest in their ancient lore. Though not scholars in our sense of the word, and therefore of little use as teachers of the language, they are extremely useful to more advanced students, who are able to set them to do that kind of work for which they are fit, and to check their labors by judicious supervision. All our great Sanskrit scholars from Sir William Jones to H. H. Wilson, have fully acknowledged their obligations to their native assistants. They used to

work in Calcutta, Benares, and Bombay with a pandit at each elbow, instead of the grammar and dictionary which European scholars have to consult at every difficult passage.³⁵

I did not go to India to use the lama as a walking dictionary, as Orientalists had done in the previous century, although that was also part of his value. Nor would the lama's commentary be the interlinear translation that Benjamin prescribes for the sacred text, but an invisible commentary; not a translation deriving from the after-life of the text, but, with the lama's word, an isomorphic rendering of the author's intention, as passed down orally from teacher to student, traced back ultimately to the author himself. That author, in turn, had written his text based on what he had been taught by his teachers, traced back, of course, to the Buddha.

This particular vision of Tibetan culture seems in retrospect to be of a piece with what has been variously referred to as salvage ethnography, redemptive ethnography, or the ethnographic pastoral. George Marcus speaks of what he calls "the salvage mode" in which "signs of fundamental change are apparent, but the ethnographer is able to salvage a cultural state on the verge of transformation." Here, the current surviving elements of cultural authenticity in the midst of change are located in terms of a temporal or spatial preserve, such as a premodern "golden age" or a remote, and thus untainted, locale.³⁶ The ethnographers task is to represent the culture, in writing, in that moment before its imminent loss, just as I attempted to capture the lamas' wisdom before they succumbed to history.

It was first necessary to get there, which entailed applying for grants. I was told that the government of India was not well disposed toward projects that involved working with Tibetans and under no circumstances would it approve a project that proposed study with Tibetans outside of Delhi or Benares. It was therefore necessary to craft the first of many dissimulations and disguises; the means of access to secret knowledge seemed to remain closed, even outside Tibet. So I proposed to study a chapter of a second-century Sanskrit text with scholars at Delhi University, which had the only Department of Buddhist Studies in India. That grant once received, it was necessary to determine the best means of getting to the monastery, located in an area of restricted access to foreigners, as Tibet itself had been since the reign of Qianlong. I was advised to make application to the Department of Rehabilitation of the Home Ministry, which had jurisdiction over the monasteries, officially known as Lama Camps. It was important, however, that I not reveal that I was a graduate student on a government grant (it was important above all, I was warned, that the Department of Rehabilitation not suspect that I was an anthropologist), but rather to represent myself as a Buddhist layman seeking to visit the monastery in order to practice my religion. The Bureau of His Holiness the Dalai Lama in New Delhi provided me with a letter to that effect which I carried to the director of the appropriate department, who advised me that I could apply for a one-month pass, but it would take several weeks for the pass to be processed. The disguise had worked. Those weeks turned into months, during which time I tried to make do, studying with monks in Dharamsala and Delhi, frustrated that they were either young, having received the bulk of their training after leaving Tibet, or of the wrong college, outside the specific lineage of the author of my text. In each case, what I learned was useful but, I felt, inauthentic. It was necessary for me to go to the south, to don a disguise and cross the boundary into

the restricted area, where the old monks lived and where their lineage of teachings had not been tainted by entering the cars of foreigners.

In the monastery

On February 4, 1979, I arrived by taxi at a place called Mundgod, near the town of Hubli in Karnataka state in southwest India. In Mundgod stood the refugee versions of two of the three great seats of the dGe lugs pa sect of Tibetan Buddhism. These were the monasteries of Ganden and Drepung, which in their original locations outside of Lhasa housed 5,000 and 12,000 monks, respectively, Drepung being the largest Buddhist monastery in the world. In 1979, now known officially as Lama Camp No. 1 and Lama Camp No. 2, each housed approximately 300 monks, most of whom were children. In due time I was escorted around the monastery to meet the various dignitaries: the abbots, ex-abbots, and incarnate lamas. I was told that the abbot of Gomang College, the monk whom I had come so far to meet, was away, having been called to mediate a land dispute between Tibetan farmers near Mysore. He would be away for a month. I had only planned to stay for six weeks.

To each of the lamas I met, I explained that I had come to study this particular text with this particular abbot and they all commented duly on the difficulty of the text and the great learning of the abbot. At some point, I was led into what was little more than a hut, where in the middle of the stone floor sat an elderly monk. He wore only his dull yellow lower robe and a white undershirt, the sleeveless strap kind that old men wear. He was the ex-abbot of the other college of Drepung; in Tibet there has been a long political and scholastic rivalry between the two colleges. I went through my now well-rehearsed accounting for my presence, explaining that I was there to study with the abbot of the other college. He seemed not to mind, saying that all lamas teach pretty much the same thing, the only difference is that when they give examples, some use a pillar and some use a pot (the two standard examples used in Tibetan Buddhist logic). "Both are impermanent," I responded, demonstrating my knowledge of Buddhist philosophy. He laughed. This ex-abbot was now devoting all of his time to teaching, lecturing to six different classes a day, ranging from ten-year-olds learning the basics of Buddhist epistemology to forty-year-old monks studying the arcane codes of monastic discipline. Later that day, before supper, I was walking around the monastery, the day of formalities done, when I encountered the old ex-abbot. This time he was wearing his full robes. Now standing, taller than me, he looked rather formidable. He took me by the hand and we began to walk together as he went to an evening assembly. "I'm quite busy these days," he said, "but I'll teach you whatever you wish." My chief informant had found me.

What I describe could very well be translated into the vocabulary of ethnography. The fieldworker arrives for the first time at the site, makes the appropriate contacts with the hierarchs of the society, learns some of the etiquette of interaction, chooses a native informant, and establishes the all-important rapport. But the rapport was the product of a complex overlay of categories, achieved only by a certain slippage in lines of demarcation. I was a foreigner, a layman, an American, relatively speaking, quite wealthy, and a student. He was a Tibetan, a monk, a refugee in India, a famous scholar and retired abbot, in exile. As a foreigner I had gained entry into one of the major monastic centers of Tibetan Buddhism, but only in its refugee incarnation. This

would have seemed impossible in pre-1959 Tibet, but now the monastery was a stateless institution deprived of its past enormous wealth, where I was welcomed, but chiefly (I suspected) for my potential as a patron, being requested constantly by the monastery administration to support building projects, to buy raffle tickets, to translate appeals for donations. I was frequently invited by individual monks to elaborate meals which ended in the request that I become their “sponsor,” one of the few English words they knew.

At the same time there was a certain resentment at my presence in a place where I did not really seem to fit. The former abbot was one of the three highly respected scholars in the monastic college and so was in great demand as a teacher, his entire day filled with classes of up to twenty young monks in his small room. He had now agreed to teach me for an hour and a half a day, disrupting his schedule and those of his students. Mine were almost always private classes, with another monk occasionally sitting in. When I would come for my class and stand waiting outside his room, one of the monks would announce, “The *inji* is here,” using not the more proper term for foreigner, *phyi rgyal ba* (“one from an outer kingdom”), but *inji*, the Tibetan term for “English” used commonly to name all Europeans and Americans, at least from the time of the Younghusband invasion, the most significant encounter with westerners in Tibetan cultural memory.

But I was not wholly other because I spoke the language. In 1951, Evans-Pritchard, stressing the absolute necessity of complete fluency in the native’s tongue, wrote, “To understand a people’s thought one has to think in their symbols.” In 1982, Marcus and Cushman listed nine conventions of ethnographic writing, the last of which was “a reticence by the authors to discuss their competence in the Other’s language.”³⁷ The Tibetan language is often divided into two forms: the religious language (*chos skad*) and the common language (*phal skad*). My training had been almost exclusively in the former, such that I could understand and participate in discussions of technical scholastic topics with effort but could describe life in America, for example, in only the most simple terms. To be able to speak Tibetan at all as a foreigner was quite anomalous in Mundgod. The anomaly was multiplied by the fact that I, a foreigner and a layman, could talk about, albeit haltingly, and wanted to study, the things that monks study.

In Tibetan society there was a rather clear demarcation between the roles of monks and laypeople, a demarcation that seemed to be rigidified in exile. In Tibet only about 25 percent of the monks at the three great monasteries around Lhasa had been engaged in the scholastic curriculum and of these only a small portion went beyond rather elementary levels. The rest of the monks pursued a variety of occupations, employed either by the monasteries or engaged in their own businesses. There were monks whose task it was to propitiate the protective deities of the monastery, there were monks who cooked and brewed vats of Tibetan tea, and monks who took for themselves the task of enforcing order. These last were the infamous *ldab-ldobs*, a category without a precise analog in the history of western monasticism, something of a cross between an athletic fraternity and a police force.³⁸

Laypeople made offerings to monasteries or to individual monks in the form of money, grain, tea, and butter. They would receive blessings from incarnate lamas at public festivals or teachings, and could pay monks to read scriptures or perform rituals of protection or exorcism, or to provide advice about the future through a

variety of forms of divination. More wealthy laypeople might donate funds for the printing of texts or make a large offering to a monastic college or house in which each monk would be provided tea and tsampa (roasted barley flour that is the staple of the Tibetan diet) and a small amount of money. It was quite rare for a layman to study the scholastic literature or to speak the scholastic language, which the lay community seemed to regard with some pride as incomprehensible. The monk-layman occupational division was changed in exile, where almost all of the monks were engaged in the scholastic curriculum at some level. At the same time, the land owned by the monastery was no longer cultivated by tenant farmers, as it had been in Tibet, but by the monks themselves. The older monks sometimes lamented the time that was lost from study, heightening the contrast between their present situation in exile and that of pre-1959 Tibet, where there seemed always to have been time.

Because I had studied at the University of Virginia, where the Buddhist Studies program was to some degree modeled on the monastic curriculum, I had had some of the indoctrination of the scholar-monks; I had studied some of the same texts, albeit in very different contexts. It was this minimal shared vocabulary that allowed us to speak. For me to remark to the former abbot that a pillar and a pot are both impermanent was to indicate knowledge of the code, making me, in some limited sense, an insider. The first thing that the monks wanted to know was whether I had studied *mtshan nyid*, which might be rendered as “dogmatics,” the hermetic discourse the mastery of which determined status in the monastery. This was how they placed me. Yet, as a foreigner who had come to study Madhyamaka (which the Tibetans considered the most profound of all philosophical schools), I fit neither the category of the monk nor the layman and occasionally would feel pushed in one direction or the other. When talking with an abbot one day while he was having his head shaved by another monk, I was invited to sit in the chair when he was finished. I could resist such suggestions by pointing out that I was married (in colloquial expression, literally, “I possess one of inferior birth” [*nga la skyes dman yod*]). When I would ask what projects I might support to improve the living conditions of the monks, I was often directed toward such traditional lay roles as sponsoring the printing of books or the casting of buddha images or paying for a ceremony in which I would pay for the monks’ morning tea and then walk down the rows of assembled monks, giving each Rs 1 (at that time approximately eight cents). In *From Anxiety to Method*, George Devereux explores the problem of what he called “elicited countertransference,” that situation in which the participant-observer fails to realize “that his subjects force him into the procrustean bed of an ascribed status, chosen in accordance with their own needs.”³⁹ In my case, I was unwilling to accept the role which would have most clearly justified my study, that is, the role of a monk, but I was willing to accept the role of the Buddhist layman, paying for ceremonies and building projects when I felt the money could be better spent on diet and hygiene.

For all this I was perceived as being quite wealthy. Indeed, I was told later that the monthly stipend for the Fulbright Doctoral Dissertation Research Abroad grant at that time exceeded the salary of the prime minister of India. Although I had come seeking their wisdom, to sit at the lama’s feet, a great deal of power rested with me, with the monks acceding to my requests (usually for books) which they probably felt unable to refuse. Despite their pride in the scholastic tradition, it seemed baffling to them that someone from America, which they envisioned as something akin to a

Buddhist Pure Land, should want to live in their dry and dusty little monastery, where even they felt out of place. I would explain that I was there to write a book that would make me a teacher of Buddhism in America. But this only perplexed them more; that a person whose knowledge of Buddhist doctrine was so limited, who on the debating courtyard never seemed to get beyond the more dull-witted fifteen-year-olds, should be on the verge of becoming a teacher of Buddhism in America seemed to induce an incredulity that I soon began to share.

Toward the end of the first of my two stays at the monastery (the first of six weeks, the second of four months) the abbot of Gomang for whom I had been waiting so long finally returned to the monastery. He agreed to read my text with me, but when I arrived for the first class and set up my tape recorder, he protested. The tape recorder was my primary instrument for recording the precious oral commentary, and without it much of my purpose was lost. But he insistently refused to allow me to record his voice, explaining that his dentures distorted the sound of his voice, something he did not want preserved. I was left to ask questions and take notes. Throughout he seemed bored by the process, always finding ways of changing the subject, often to a book he was writing about tea. His primary interest in me seemed to be the number of languages in which I knew the word for "tea" and how those might be rendered in Tibetan transliteration.

Forbidden to capture the lama's voice because he had no teeth, I now placed my hopes in the former abbot of the other college of the monastery, while continuing to visit the Gomang abbot occasionally in order to maintain good relations with both of the rival colleges of the monastery. I would now go every afternoon to the room of the former abbot, wait until his class was over and then go in, bow down three times, and sit on the floor in front of him. He would be sitting on a wooden platform about a foot high, covered with Tibetan rugs, that also served as his bed. There was a small wooden table in front of us on which he would place the text; I would set up the microphone next to it. The text then rested between us, laid open, with a microphone beside it, there to record the words that would animate the writing. After chatting briefly, he would ask me where we had stopped last time and then begin reading from the previous page, going over what he had read the day before, sometimes at great length, so that in some cases we progressed only a few lines beyond the previous day's terminus. The sessions lasted about 90–100 minutes.

His approach was to begin by simply reading the sentence aloud, sometimes twice. He would then paraphrase it, which often meant nothing more than changing the verb from the classical to the colloquial form. If the sentence was something that he had nothing to say about, he would go on, unless I stopped him to ask a question. Often he would ask me whether I had understood, by asking, "Is it all right?" before proceeding. The text that he was reading from was one that I had chosen, an eighteenth-century doxography which offered syntheses of the tenets of the four Indian schools of Buddhist philosophy. It was a well-known work but one which was not included in the standard geshe curriculum of any of the dGe lugs colleges. The ex-abbot did not own a copy of the text and I was not sure whether he had ever read it, nor did he seem to have read ahead to prepare for the classes, because he sometimes would seem surprised or puzzled by something in the text, in which case he would return to that point the next day, obviously having given the matter some thought the night before. His accumulated knowledge of the major works upon which the

doxography was based seemed sufficient to allow him to expound, often in great detail, on points that he felt were important. He would dwell especially on those topics that received particular attention in the geshe curriculum, explaining how they were understood by one college as opposed to another and how the points would be debated between them. I very rarely spoke except to ask a brief question or to ask him to repeat something I had missed.⁴⁰ When I was tired I often let statements pass without understanding them, knowing that I could go back and listen to the tape and, if still confused, bring my question the next day. The session would end when he said, "Shall we stop there?" Sometimes we would pass the point to which I had prepared and I would ask if we could stop. Especially long sessions would end when I had not brought enough tape. He would then offer me a drink called Orange Squash, an artificial fruit concentrate that was poured into a glass of water. I would always apologize by saying that foreigners could not drink the water because it made us sick, at which point he would call for one of the young monks to go buy us a small pot of sweet milk tea at the monastery kitchen. This would be brought in a few minutes, and we would drink the tea out of tin cups and talk; he would usually tell me about monastery life in Tibet.

Most of the day was spent in my room, reading and writing. I was often frustrated by the fact that this was indeed a monastery, where there were a great many assemblies, ceremonies, and debates which the ex-abbot attended, requiring that our classes be canceled. There was a daily schedule and monthly calendar that I never fully understood. Much of my typing was done to the background sound of several hundred monks chanting in the main hall fifty yards from my room, their rhythms punctuated by blaring horns, beating drums, clashing cymbals, and the foghorn blasts of the great trumpets. It was in this setting that the creation of the English text took place.

It was there that I tried to synthesize two very different models of authority. From the Tibetan perspective, which I sought to appropriate, there seemed to be a powerful investment in the spoken word. For me to sit at the lama's feet was to imitate the setting of a Buddhist sutra: "Thus did I hear at one time. The Buddha was seated on Vulture Peak surrounded by a great assembly of monks and a great assembly of bodhisattvas," one which is evoked in all teachings in which the student is instructed to imagine the teacher as the Buddha. The centrality of hearing the words from the mouth of the teacher is evident everywhere. There is, for example, the case of *lung*, a term used to render both the Sanskrit term *āgama*, generally translated as "scripture," as well as the term *vyākaraṇa* (as in *lung bstan*), with its two denotations of "explanation" by the Buddha (usually in answer to a question) and of "prophecy," notably the Buddha's prediction that a particular disciple will become a buddha at a specified time in the far distant future. But most commonly, when Tibetans speak of receiving *lung* they are referring to a ritual in which one is granted permission to engage in a specific meditation or study a specific text through hearing the text that serves as the foundation of the practice. This hearing is often accomplished through a form of speed-reading in which the lama races through the text at a pace that makes the apprehension of any meaning nearly impossible. But grasping the meaning does not seem to be the point, it is rather that the student hear what the teacher heard from his teacher, who heard it from his teacher; this transmission of the text, without a word of explanation, is a participation in origin, the kind of commentary that Foucault describes as "agitated

from within by the dream of masked repetition: in the distance there is, perhaps, nothing other than what was there at the point of departure: simple recitation."⁴¹ Something similar seems to be at play in times of crisis in the monastery or community, when the canon is recited. The 108 volumes of the word of the Buddha are taken from their place in the temple and carried in a procession around the monastery. They are then all read, not in chorus but in cacophony, as each monk takes a different portion of a volume and reads it aloud at the top of his lungs as his fellows read other portions until every page of the canon has been spoken. (Such a ceremony took place during my time at the monastery in order to speed the arrival of the monsoon.) There is also the convention that to study a text, it is not sufficient merely to read it; one must receive oral instruction upon it from a teacher who has in turn received such instruction in the past.

Buddhist Studies, as it has developed in the west, privileges, on the surface, a very different locus of authority. Buddhist Studies has long placed its faith in the text, to be excavated with philology and explicated with comparative philosophy, with no need for living Buddhists. Its progenitors are scholars like Louis de la Vallée Poussin, Max Müller, and Arthur Waley, who never visited Asia during their distinguished careers as translators, participants in the nineteenth-century assumption that it is the task of the western scholar to recover the classical traditions of Asia from their ancient texts, traditions that have been either lost or corrupted by the modern inhabitants of the continent. The residue of this assumption still lingers, with the scholar's primary task remaining the establishment of a critical edition of his chosen text, which may or may not then be translated. From such a perspective, the ephemeral words of Buddhist monks carry very little weight, for how is their validity to be judged unless they can be located also in a text?

I was left to negotiate between two traditions, one that located authority in the word, the other in the text, as I now began to write what was to be judged as my own text, the means to establish my own authority in the western academy. I would sit at the typewriter translating the Tibetan text based on what I had learned from the lama, trying to weave his commentary into my rendering of the words on the page. And indeed, his commentary was indispensable in the ostensibly simple task of gaining a rudimentary grasp of the meanings of the words, because the text I was translating, like so many others, was part of the vast intertextual yet hermetic world of Buddhist doctrine, with allusions so thick as to be incomprehensible without the lama's word. But beyond the translation there was the matter of how to handle his extensive elaborations on the text. I decided to write an introduction to the translation which would explore the points that he had raised. This introduction, constructed from the tapes, eventually grew to exceed the length of the translation itself, making the translation in effect an appendix, a supplement to the commentary. His words were obviously deeply embedded in scholastic literature and, in order to satisfy Buddhological demands of reference to a text, I made every effort to trace his explanations to a written source, to find what he had said already inscribed in a book. This was usually possible eventually, but there remained points that seemed original to him, who was the author of no text, at least in the Buddhological sense. From these strands I wove my own text, taking the words I had heard in the day, repeating the act of hearing at night, but this time listening to his disembodied voice emanating from the speaker of the tape recorder, and translating those words into my English text. But how should

these be referenced? I ended up footnoting such points as “oral commentary of Ye shes Thub brtan” although they were words which only I had heard, recorded on cheap cassettes that disintegrated over the years, years during which he died. I moved then from the role of listener, to that of recorder, transcriber, translator, and finally, author, with the name of the lama marginalized to the acknowledgments at the beginning and the footnotes at the end.

Yet the words of the lama, the oral commentary, were already a text, when writing is seen not only as a technology in its more narrow sense, as a mechanism that leads to new intellectual practices and hence new ways of producing consciousness in society (as important as this is in the history of Buddhism⁴²). Writing is also a technology in the wider sense, as a more amorphous, pervasively deployed, institutional practice. It is in this wider sense that one could argue that even if the lama’s words were never turned into the shapes of Tibetan letters and carved in relief and backwards into a wooden block to create a xylograph, even if they were never translated into English and typed by me onto a page of paper, they were still already written. If writing is seen as “the durable institution of a sign,” as a means for recording speech so that it can be repeated in the absence of the original speaker and without knowledge of the speaker’s intention, then all linguistic signs are a form of writing.⁴³ Here at the monastery, the original speaker, the eighteenth-century author of the text I was translating, was absent, as was the ur-speaker from which all Buddhist speech is seen ultimately to derive, the Buddha himself. The Buddha was absent although his signs were everywhere. What the lama provided was merely a commentary on those words, which carried with it the unspoken claim to know that ur-speaker’s intention⁴⁴. Taking my place in the unbroken line of transmission, it was my task to also produce a commentary, a commentary in Foucault’s sense. “Commentary questions discourse as to what it says and intended to say; it tries to uncover the deeper meaning of speech that enables it to achieve an identity with itself, supposedly nearer to its essential truth; in other words in stating what has been said, one has to re-state what has never been said.”⁴⁵ My assumption was that there was an essential meaning that had been transmitted from master to student, and which was now being transferred from this master to this student, through the endless elaboration of commentary. And it was, further, my task to create my own commentary, through translation, tapping “the inexhaustible reserve” of the signified. The task was to bring the essential meaning closer to its self-identity, to create “the prolix discourse which is both more archaic and more contemporary” than the recorded words of my teacher: more archaic because I knew the history of the complex of allusions that is Buddhist philosophy in a way that my teacher did not. I could trace his citations of passages, drawn from his memory, back to the texts which were their source and I could check his versions against the originals, accounting for the variants. More contemporary because I was preserving the endangered commentary in English and recasting it to conform to the standards of Buddhological science, giving physical form to his oral text, turning it into a scholarly commodity to be weighed, cataloged, and deposited in the archive. I could thus participate in the Buddhist myth of the essential presence of the dharma to be translated and transmitted, and take pride in my part in rescuing it from its prophesied disappearance, so greatly hastened by the People’s Liberation Army. At the same time, however, I claimed the vantage point from which to observe my text, not on the surface of the timeless and hence ahistorical present I imagined my

teacher to inhabit, but with an X-ray vision that allowed me to see into the depths of its history, even to its origin, most hidden yet most fundamental, giving myself over to one authority while claiming another, all the while remaining blind to the practices of domination of which I was both agent and object. As Robert Young notes, "Those who evoke the 'nativist' position through a nostalgia for a lost or repressed culture idealize the possibility of that lost origin being recoverable from its former plenitude without allowing the fact that the figure of the lost origin, the 'other' that the coloniser has repressed, has itself been constructed in terms of the colonizer's own self-image."⁴⁶

From such a perspective, the Buddhologist engaged in the study of Tibetan Buddhism is faced with a dilemma, deriving from a relation to the text and a relation to the lama. The relation to the text may be termed hermeneutical in Gadamer's sense, to the extent that the text is judged as a historical object with which the modern scholar must somehow come to terms. The nature and consequences of these terms remain to be adequately defined in Buddhist Studies, where principles of interpretation have rarely passed beyond elementary problems of translation, seeking to determine what the words mean. That the translation of a single text remains a primary focus of the field and a fundamental rite of passage in the writing of the dissertation suggests that the nineteenth-century vision of Buddhism as a collection of texts in the possession of the west is still very much present, the process of appropriation being furthered incrementally as those thousands of texts are transferred one by one from an Asian language to a western one. Yet the fact that this is a process of appropriation should not obscure the degree to which Buddhist Studies imitates that which it seeks to decode, for one of the most persistent and powerful metaphors in the history of Buddhism is that of transmission, that beyond the statues and the relics and the books, all surrogates for the absent Buddha, there is a dharma to be passed from teacher to student and from culture to culture, and that dharma can be translated from one language to another without that essence being lost, a conviction held by the kings and emperors of Asia who supported the enterprise of translation, an enterprise supported today by Chinese and Japanese industrialists.

The other dilemma of the scholar of Tibetan Buddhism may be termed ethnographic in the sense that it entails coming to some understanding of the implications of his (or, less often, her) relationship to contemporary Tibetan culture. There is an immediate difference between Tibetan Buddhist Studies and classical ethnography. Evans-Pritchard declared in the ante-Derridian age, "Primitives have no texts."⁴⁷ The Tibetans certainly do, and this is where what might be termed the hermeneutical and ethnographic dilemmas of Tibetan Buddhist Studies collide, in the moment of reading texts from which one is alienated by time, under the tutelage of lamas from whom one is alienated by culture.

As texts and artifacts, Buddhism as a cultural object could be controlled from Europe. Tibet could remain valued as a repository of translations of Sanskrit texts long lost and the ancient depository of Sanskrit manuscripts long thought lost, but discovered by Sankrityayana and Tucci. The Buddhism of Tibet could at the same time remain the object of scholarly neglect as a barely recognizable mutation of the Indian original, as described by Waddell. Even those who made extensive studies of Tibetan Buddhist literature felt somehow compelled to posit a classical age for Tibetan Buddhist civilization, an age, of course, long past:

For a long time a great number of masters and doctors were educated in the convents, who delved deep into lore received from India, shed light on it with notes and commentaries and stayed as faithful to the systems of interpretation followed in the great Indian universities as no Chinese or Japanese ever did. . . . Hardening of the arteries set in with the double threat of formulas replacing the mind's independent striving after truth, and a withered theology taking the place of the yearning for spiritual rebirth. A tendency to formalism and worship of the letter gained ground on spiritual research.⁴⁸

This was the reaction of a European Buddhologist who, visiting Tibetan monasteries in 1948, found monks reading, memorizing, and debating about the classical works of Indian Buddhist philosophy that had long been held within the exclusive purview of the west; their study in twentieth-century Tibet is dismissed as yet another sign of degeneration from a golden age.

Since the Tibetan diaspora the existence of extensive Tibetan commentary and exegesis has once again had to be confronted. This is the dilemma of the relation to the lama. An opposite reaction from Tucci's has occurred, portraying the oral commentary on these texts as a cultural treasure in danger of extinction as Tibetan society has been pushed by the Chinese from their ahistorical past into the maelstrom of history, a history where, some seem to say, they cannot survive. Now the westerner who goes to study among the refugees often appears to be engaging in a New Age anthropology as cultural critique, not only portraying the old Tibet as an idyllic agrarian society, but also as a land of lamas, endowed with ancient, sometimes secret, wisdom and ruled benevolently by a buddha.⁴⁹ (To this has been added in recent years the view of Tibet as an environmentally enlightened realm.) Tibet thus has become subject to what Fabian has called "chronopolitics," in which the society under anthropological scrutiny is portrayed as occupying a time other than that of the anthropologist.⁵⁰ Pre-1959 Tibet was seen as an atemporal civilization, isolated and above the world, possessed of a timeless wisdom, undifferentiated from the "collective unconscious," a land before the fall. With exile in 1959, Tibetan culture descends into history, the site of danger and extinction. Once they have entered our time, their value is measured by what they carry from the timeless. Hence, my interest was to record the words of the old lamas, those who had received their training in Tibet, rather than those trained in exile, seeing the old lamas as remnants, artifacts of the other time.

Once Tibetan culture was perceived as struggling for survival under the threat of history, the salvage mentality easily set in, fed from two sides. From the side of the tradition itself, there was the powerful rhetoric of the oral transmission, the word to be passed on, the words being those of Madhyamaka philosophy, regarded as the most sublime of Buddhist doctrines, and expounded by the dGe lugs pa as their unique claim to doxographical triumph. From the other side was the long-established priority in Buddhist Studies of the preservation of the text, for salvage has been an essential activity in the construction of Buddhism as a textual object since the time of Hodgson. Manuscripts have been searched for, discovered, taken from Asia so that they can be preserved, and once in Europe, edited into critical editions, with grammatical and scribal errors corrected. These were texts that were seen as cultural artifacts of modern Asian societies, but from an earlier time, a classical period, that modern Asians had long forgotten and thereby forfeited any rights to: those responsible for

the decay could not be trusted with the treasures. Hence, there was disquiet upon discovering that Tibetan monks had been studying, memorizing, and debating these classical texts since their translation from Sanskrit for almost a millennium. One response to the Tibetans' possession of what European Buddhist Studies had thought was theirs alone was to dismiss the Tibetan tradition of study, as Tucci had, as turgid and desiccated scholasticism.

But another strategy was also available, one which carried not the contemptuous air of the more familiar Orientalism, but one which seemed somehow more moral. This was my practice of gathering the oral teaching, something that was difficult before 1959 but possible in exile. It was in exile, with Tibetan cultural capital exposed to western evaluation (supported by academic institutions), that it could be appropriated. With the motivation of salvaging what was in danger of extinction without our help, the discourse of Tibetan Buddhism, which had remained outside the reach of Buddhological appropriation and colonial power, was now available for exploitation.

However, the mere recording of the words was insufficient. Buddhology demanded that the words be transformed into a text. Seeking to gain the authenticity traditionally associated with the lama's speech while at the same time controlling the production of the text inevitably involved what de Certeau has termed "the circularity between the production of the Other and the production of the text." In order to transform the words of the former abbot into a text, he must in turn be transformed into a source to be cited, something that could be footnoted and so be cited by others. It was his voice that was sought out, discovered, taken from Asia so that it could be preserved, and once in America, edited into a text with his errors corrected and his own sources tracked down, all as part of the eternal quest of the Buddhologist to bring the textual corpus under control, to trace the last allusion. "The discourse that sets off in search of the other with the impossible task of saying the truth returns from afar with the authority to speak in the name of the other and command belief." But, as de Certeau notes, "The written discourse which cites the speech of the other is not, cannot be, the discourse of the other. On the contrary, this discourse, in writing the Fable that authorizes it, alters it."⁵¹ The fable that authorizes the discourse is the fable of the oral transmission, of the line that can, they say, be traced back to the origin, to the seat beneath the tree, and it is the fable of Tibet, of the timeless reliquary smashed open in time.

Hence, my purpose was not to participate in the life of the monastery but rather to take what I needed. And what I needed was what the monastery judged its most precious possession, the learning of its teachers. I did not go to monastery to study its structure, or the role of tea in its ritual life, but to attempt to appropriate something of the elite status of the geshe. I sought to effect this appropriation by receiving instruction on the most profound of topics, emptiness, from one of the most learned living Tibetan scholars. As Dr. Brodic reports in his ethnography of the Mlch, "The tribesmen are proscribed from lifting their gaze to the stars, a privilege accorded only to witch doctors." Thus, I gained a certain status by virtue of the fact that I was receiving private instruction from the former abbot on this difficult topic. It was the very topic on which the geshe of Se ra would not instruct Ippolito Desideri, either because they would not "teach emptiness to the untrained" or because, secure in their powerful monastery in Tibet, they felt no constraint to teach a foreigner bent on refuting them. Perhaps they found in me a more "suitable vessel" for the most profound of doctrines, or perhaps, more plausibly, as impoverished refugees they hoped

for my “sponsorship.” This was a privilege which I exploited, as I requested and received private instruction from one of the monastery’s most eminent scholars, something that would have been impossible in Tibet. But in India the situation was different. He was a stateless refugee, living in relative poverty. I came to the former British colony carrying rupees owed by the Indian government for American wheat, rupees which I exchanged for his knowledge. Throughout, teacher and student, lama and disciple, informant and graduate student remained fixated on the meaning of the text, both convinced that sufficient exegesis would lead to the recovery of the deep meaning, in short, both concerned with hermeneutics, but with one also taking something away from the other.

Cultural envy can manifest itself in a variety of forms: through scorn, as in the case of those who dismiss the Tibetan tradition of the exegesis of Indian texts as a myopic mechanism of repetition; as fantasy, as in the case of myriad European representations of Tibet in the nineteenth century; and through mimesis. It was this last expression of cultural envy that I practised. I was imitating the lama-disciple relationship as a means of creating a text. In doing so, I was occupied simultaneously by both the Buddhological and ethnographic mentality. From the former I derived the supervaluation of the text and the concomitant devaluation of the word of the contemporary Buddhist monk. From the latter I derived the sense of urgency at the fate of Tibetan Buddhist wisdom and a role for myself as an agent of its preservation. To this end, I allowed the native to speak as my informant, but in the end I wove his words into a text in which his voice was hidden, the mimetic serving as the mode of production of the text.

In a fundamental sense, the Buddhological and ethnographic enterprises as I have characterized them are hermeneutical in that both are plumbing the depths, through a variety of methods, to arrive at the hidden meaning. The text was regarded as something to be deciphered to arrive at its meaning, and the former abbot served a double function: as a supplement to the text itself and as the authority who, already having himself gained knowledge of the meaning of the text, would lead me to it, a meaning which I could then see and acknowledge, and “translate,” providing me the liberation I sought (whether it be from *samsāra* or graduate school). It was as if the ethnographer’s camera of the epigraph remained locked in focus on the text, like a manuscript to be photographed and preserved on microfilm, while the dead eye of the dummy lens, directed at the right angle, remained blind to the conditions of the production of the text, to the use of the text, to the role of the subject in the construction of the text, laying claim to its meaning but failing to see its own role in the construction of that meaning.⁵² In my case, it was the tape recorder rather than the camera that was used to capture the native, allowing me to record and carry away the lama’s voice, the precious oral transmission, to be transformed into my dissertation, my silent text. If my lama was somehow being deceived in the process, the deception was never greater than my own imagining that it was somehow possible to be the disciple of an Asian master while at the same time using this “experience” as a means of gaining my credentials as an Orientalist, of becoming a master of Asia myself. In his critique of participant-observation Pierre Bourdieu writes:

“Participant” anthropology, for its part – when not merely inspired by nostalgia for agrarian paradises, the principle of all conservative ideologies –

regards the anthropological invariants and the universality of the most basic experiences as sufficient justification for seeking eternal answers to the eternal questions of cosmologies and cosmogonies in the practical answers which the peasants of Kabylia or elsewhere have given to the practical, historically situated problems that were forced on them in a given state of their instruments for material and symbolic appropriation of the world. By cutting practices off from their real conditions of existence, in order to credit them with alien intentions, out of false generosity conducive to stylistic effects, the exaltation of lost wisdom dispossesses them of everything that constitutes their reason and their *raison d'être*, and locks them in the eternal essence of a "mentality."⁵³

Bourdieu writes of an Islamic mountain society of Algeria but his caveat pertains equally to the case of Tibet, a mountain society of Inner Asia with its own enticing rhetoric of eternal answers to eternal questions and of lost wisdom. Crossing the border into the restricted area and entering the monastery made it easy to forget the intersecting histories that resulted in my encounter with the lama, pretending that I could somehow appropriate his symbolic world and then leave, taking his mentality with me. I saw the historically situated problem of his having to flee his country only as my opportunity to record the words of one recently driven from his Buddhist (and also agrarian) paradise before those words were lost. In the case of Tibet, the compulsion to resort to hermeneutics, the compulsion to transcend and thus forget the historical situatedness, both of the observer and the observed, is also difficult, but no less important to resist.

The end of the day at the monastery, after the evening debating session, after dark, was the time to recite. A significant portion of the training of a Tibetan monk involves the memorization of hundreds and sometimes thousands of pages of texts. In order to keep things memorized before from being forgotten, monks would walk around the grounds of the monastery at night, alone or in pairs, reciting aloud the pages they knew by heart. At that same hour I would usually be typing in my room under a bare lightbulb, the single window in the room, a barred window (to keep out thieves I was told), open to let in the night breeze. In their nightly circuit the monks would often pause outside the window to watch me type, reciting all the while. Unlike the zombies at the window in *The Night of the Living Dead*, their presence was something that I did not fear. I see in retrospect that it was their words that I was typing, the bars on the window and the multitude of voices preventing me from getting it all down on paper, those long sheets of Indian paper in which the chips of wood from which the page was made are still visible.

But this examination of the forces at play during my days at the monastery should not end without describing how it ended, with a ritual of departure, a participation in omission. Before departing from the teacher, it is traditional for him to begin to teach a new text so that the student may someday return to hear the rest. Before departing from the teacher, it is traditional that the student not bow down, as he would at the end of the day's teaching, signifying that the teaching has not ended, but is only interrupted. This suggests the possibility (or at least the dream) of someday returning to the monastery to read once again, having stopped believing in the nostalgic meta-narratives, both theirs and ours, that have so far captivated us all.

Notes

- 1 The Capuchin mission to Tibet had been abandoned in 1710. However, in October 1716, just seven months after Desideri's arrival in Lhasa, three Capuchin fathers appeared at Desideri's residence in Lhasa, informing him that they had written to Rome with the demand that the mission belonged to the Capuchins and no other order would be permitted in Tibet. Desideri reports that he replied that he would comply with their request and leave Tibet as soon as the order arrived from the College de Propaganda Fide in Rome. Such an order was received in 1721. One of the three Capuchin fathers was Francesco Orazio della Penna (1680-1745) who would remain in Tibet until 1731, compiling a Tibetan dictionary of 35,000 words. This was translated into English by F. C. G. Schroeter in 1826 as *A dictionary of Bhotanta or Boutan language*. He also is said to have translated *Lam rim chen mo* into Latin, the translation since lost. The documents relating to the Capuchin mission in Tibet have been gathered and edited by Luciano Petech in *I missionari Italiani nel Tibet e nel Nepal*, vols. 1-4 (Roma: 1952-53).
- 2 This work appears in vols. 5-7 of Petech's *I missionari Italiani nel Tibet e nel Nepal* (Roma: 1954-56). An abridged English translation of the work was made by Filippo de Filippi and published as *An Account of Tibet: The Travels of Ippolito Desideri of Pistoia, S.J., 1712-1727*, rev. ed. (London: George Routledge & Sons, 1937).
- 3 de Filippi, ed., *An Account of Tibet*, p. 49.
- 4 *Mgo dkar gyi bla ma i po li do zhes bya ba yis phul ba'i bod kyi mkhas pa rnam la skye ba snga ma dang stong pa nyid kyi lta ba'i sgo nas zhu ba*. For a survey of Desideri's Tibetan manuscripts preserved in the Archivum Romanum of the Jesuits and a brief discussion of their contents, see Richard Sherburne, "A Christian-Buddhist Dialog? Some Notes on Desideri's Tibetan Manuscripts" in *Reflections on Tibetan Culture: Essays in Memory of Turrell V Wylie*, ed. Lawrence Epstein and Richard F. Sherburne, (Lewiston, N.Y.: Edwin Mellen, 1990), pp. 295-305. See also Giuseppe Toscano, "Il concerto di sunyata nel Desideri" in *Orientalia Iosephi Tucci memoriae dicata*, ed. G. Gnoli and L. Lanciotti, Serie Orientale Roma 56 (Rome: ISMEO, 1988), 3: 1465-92.
- 5 de Filippi, ed., *An Account of Tibet*, pp. 104-5.
- 6 The complete title of the work is *Sangs rgyas bcom ldan 'das 'jig rten thams cad kyi ma 'dris pa'i mdzas bshes chenpo ston pa bla na med pa la zab mo rten cing 'brel par 'byung gsung ba'i sgo nas bstod pa legs bshad snying po* and occurs in the second volume (*kha*) of his "miscellaneous writings" (*bka' 'bum thor pu*). See *The Collected Works (gsun' bum) of the Incomparable Lord Tson-kha-pa bLo-bzan-grags-pa (Khams gsum chos kyis [sic] rgyal po shar tsong kha pa chen po'i gsung 'bum)* (New Delhi: Mongolian Lama Guru Deva, 1978), 13a4-16a3 (Guru Deva, 225-31). The passage cited here occurs at 15a5-15b2.
- 7 For Moorcroft's role in the British "discovery" of Lake Manasarowar in 1812, see Charles Allen, *A Mountain in Tibet* (London: Andre Deutsch, 1982), pp. 79-100.
- 8 József Terjék, "Alexander Csoma de Kőrös: A Short Biography," in *Collected Works of Alexander Csoma de Kőrös*, ed. J. Terjék, vol. 1, *Tibetan-English Dictionary*, by Alexander Csoma de Kőrös (Budapest: Akadémiai Kiadó, 1984), p. xii.
- 9 *Ibid.*, 1: xxvii.
- 10 Max Müller, *Chips from a German Workshop*, vol. 1, *Essays on the Science of Religion*, (1869; reprint, Chico, Calif.: Scholars Press, 1985), p. 190.
- 11 These works were reprinted in four volumes in 1984 to mark the bicentenary of his birth. See Terjék, ed., *Collected Works of Alexander Csoma de Kőrös*. The four volumes are (1) *Tibetan-English Dictionary*, (2) *Tibetan Grammar*, (3) *Sanskrit-Tibetan Vocabulary* (a translation of the *Mahāvvyutpattī*), and (4) *Tibetan Studies*.
- 12 Csoma de Kőrös, *Tibetan-English Dictionary*, pp. viii-ix.
- 13 This entire account has been drawn from "Alexander Csoma de Kőrös: A Short Biography," pp. vii-xxxvi. See also Th. Duka, *Life and Works of Alexander Csoma de Kőrös* (New Delhi, 1885); and, more recently, Géza Bethlenfalvy, "Alexander Csoma de Kőrös in Ladakh," in *Proceedings of the Csoma de Kőrös Memorial Symposium*, ed. Louis Ligeti, (Budapest: Akadémiai Kiadó, 1978), pp. 7-26; Bernard Le Calloc'h, "Les biographes d'Alexander Csoma de Kőrös," *Journal Asiatique* 272 (1984), pp. 403-23, and "Alexander

Csoma de Kőrös: Le bodhisattva hongrois," *Revue de l'histoire des religions* 204 (1987): 353–88.

14 See Le Calloc'h, "Alexander Csoma de Kőrös: Le bodhisattva hongrois," pp. 353–88.

15 As Philip Almond notes in *The British Discovery of Buddhism*:

Buddhism, by 1860, had come to exist, not in the Orient, but in the Oriental libraries and institutes of the West, in its texts and manuscripts, at the desks of the Western savants who interpreted it. It has become a textual object, defined, classified, and interpreted through its own textuality. By the middle of the century, the Buddhism that existed "out there" was beginning to be judged by a West that *alone* knew what Buddhism was, is, and ought to be. The essence of Buddhism came to be seen as expressed not "out there", in the Orient, but in the West through the control of Buddhism's own textual past.

See Philip C. Almond, *The British Discovery of Buddhism* (Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 1988), p. 13. For an excellent survey of European Tibetan Studies after Csoma de Kőrös, see D. Seyfort Rugg, "The Study of Tibetan Philosophy and Its Indian Sources. Notes on Its History and Method," in *Proceedings of the 1976 Csoma de Kőrös Symposium*, ed. L. Ligeti, Bibliotheca Orientalia Hungarica, no. 23 (Budapest, 1978), pp. 377–91.

16 See, e.g., the debate between Hodgson and Turnour as set forth by Hodgson in his "Note on the Primary Language of the Buddhist Writings" which appeared in the *Bengal Asiatic Journal* in 1837. It has been reprinted in Brian Houghton Hodgson, *Essays on the Languages, Literature, and Religion of Nepal and Tibet: Together with Further Papers on the Geography, Ethnology, and Commerce of Those Countries* (London: Trubner & Company, 1874. reprint, New Delhi: Asian Educational Services, 1991), pp. 120–126 (page citations are to the original edition). For a general discussion of the scholarship surrounding the Sanskrit vs. Pāli debate, see J. W. de Jong, *A Brief History of Buddhist Studies in Europe and America*, 2d ed., Bibliotheca Indo-Buddhica, no. 33 (Delhi: Sri Satguru, 1987), pp. 23–36.

17 L. Austine Waddell, *Tibetan Buddhism: With Its Mystic Cults, Symbolism and Mythology, and Its Relation to Indian Buddhism* (New York: Dover, 1972), pp. viii–ix. This edition is an unabridged republication of the 1895 edition, published under the title, *The Buddhism of Tibet, or Lamaism*.

18 On Cortés, see Tzvetan Todorov, *The Conquest of America: The Question of the Other*, trans. Richard Howard (New York: Harper & Row, 1984), pp. 116–19, 247. On Captain Cook, see Marshall Sahlins, *Islands of History* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1985).

19 On the role of disguise for the Orientalist, examining the case of Edward William Lane, see Edward Said, *Orientalism* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1978), pp. 160–64; and Timothy Mitchell, *Colonising Egypt* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1991), pp. 27–28.

20 Waddell, *Tibetan Buddhism*, pp. 10, 14.

21 *Ibid.*, p. xi. It is noteworthy that Desideri, writing 150 years earlier and before the colonial period, offers an antipodal assessment: "Though the Thibetans are pagans and idolaters, the doctrine they believe is very different from that of other pagans of Asia [meaning India]. Their Religion, it is true, came originally from the ancient country of Hindustan, now usually called Mogol, but there, in the lapse of time, the old religion fell into disuse and was ousted by new fables. On the other hand, the Thibettans, intelligent, and endowed with a gift of speculation, abolished much that was unintelligible in the tenets, and only retained what appeared to comprise truth and goodness." See de Filippi, ed., *An Account of Tibet*, pp. 225–26.

22 Waddell, *Tibetan Buddhism*, p. 157. With such a view, Waddell cannot resist an occasional dig at the Theosophists, who claimed Tibet to be the ethereal dwelling place of the telepathic mahatmas, preservers of Atlantean wisdom for the postdiluvian age. When Waddell finally was able to reach Lhasa, as a member of the Younghusband expedition, he made it a point during his audience with the dGa' ldan Khri pa, who was left as head-of-state to negotiate with the British after the Dalai Lama fled, of asking whether he had ever heard of the

mahatmas. “Regarding the so-called ‘Mahatmas,’ it was important to elicit the fact that this Cardinal, one of the most learned and profound scholars in Tibet, was, like the other learned Lamas I have interrogated on the subject, entirely ignorant of any such beings.” See L. Austine Waddell, *Lhasa and Its Mysteries: With a Record of the British Tibetan Expedition of 1903–1904* (1905; reprint, New York: Dover, 1988), pp. 409–10.

- 23 For an extended discussion of the deployment of the term “Lamaism” in European representations of Tibetan Buddhism, see my *Prisoners of Shangri-la* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press), forthcoming.
- 24 Waddell, *Tibetan Buddhism*, pp. 154, 17.
- 25 *Ibid.*, p. viii.
- 26 See Peter Stallybrass and Allon White, *The Politics and Poetics of Transgression* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1986).
- 27 Waddell, *Lhasa and Its Mysteries*, pp. 1–2. Beyond the usual trope of rape for the act of imperial conquest, what is noteworthy here is the alternation of the female city of Lhasa and the male Grand Lama as victims of the rape, who together “have yielded up their secrets and lie disenchanting before our Western eyes.” Waddell’s language here is illustrative of Sara Suleri’s point of “how closely a reading of colonialism is aligned to a critique of masculine anxiety.” See her *The Rhetoric of English India* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1992), p. 17.
- 28 *Ibid.*, pp. 447–48. In later life, Waddell would become more explicit about the role of the fair-skinned race in the diffusion of culture, claiming an Aryan origin for Sumerian and Egyptian civilization in such works as his 1929 *The Makers of Civilization in Race and History* (reprint, Delhi: S. Chand, 1968).
- 29 See Raymond Williams, *The Country and the City* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1973), p. 35.
- 30 On the degeneration of the dharma, see E. Obermiller, trans., *History of Buddhism by Buxton, Part 2: The History of Buddhism in India and Tibet* (Heidelberg, 1932), pp. 171–80 which contains a survey of Mahāyāna sūtras on the topic, including a translation of the apocalyptic *Candragarbhaparipṛcchā*. See also Jan Nattier, *Once Upon a Future Time: Studies in a Buddhist Prophecy of Decline* (Berkeley: Asian Humanities Press, 1991); and David W. Chappell, “Early Forebodings of the Death of Buddhism,” *Numen* 27 (1980). 122–53.
- 31 Giuseppe Tucci, *To Lhasa and Beyond: Diary of the Expedition to Tibet in the Year 1948* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Snow Lion, 1987), p. 130.
- 32 “The Yogi and the Commissar” is the title of an essay by Arthur Koestler, first published in 1942, in which he argued that the “sociological spectrum” of the nonwestern world (in which he included the Soviet Union) extended between two extremes, represented on one end by the Communist Commissar who is willing to employ any means toward his revolutionary end and on the other by the introspective Yogi who passively doubts all practical ends. See Arthur Koestler, *The Yogi and the Commissar, and Other Essays* (New York: Macmillan, 1947). The ways in which Orientalist discourse of the colonial period is seamlessly transformed into Cold War discourse is provocatively analyzed by William Pietz in his “The ‘Post-Colonialism’ of Cold War Discourse,” *Social Text* 19/20 (1988). 55–75. The case of the Chinese invasion and occupation of Tibet provides a particularly interesting example of the manipulation of colonial categories. In the nineteenth century, both Tibet and China were regarded by many European scholars and colonial officers as “Oriental Despotisms,” one ruled by a Dalai Lama, an ethereal “god-king,” and the other by an effete Emperor. During the Second World War, the Chinese, including the Communists, were briefly portrayed as a freedom-loving people, in contrast to the despotic Japanese. After the success of the Communists in 1949, the image of the oriental despot resurfaced and was easily transferred onto Chairman Mao, not as emperor but as the totalitarian leader of faceless Communists. What is notable is that the Chinese invasion and occupation of Tibet was not seen as the conquest of one despotic state by another, but as a case of opposites, the powers of darkness against the power of light. The invasion of Tibet by the People’s Liberation Army in 1950 was represented (and in many cases, continues to be represented) as an undifferentiated mass of godless communists overwhelming a peaceful land devoted only to

- ethereal pursuits, the victims of the invasion including not only the hundreds of thousands of slaughtered Tibetans but the sometimes more lamented Buddhist dharma as well. Tibet is the embodiment of the powers of the holy; China is the embodiment of the powers of the demonic. Tibetans are superhuman, Chinese are subhuman. In this Orientalist logic of oppositions, China must be debased in order for Tibet to be exalted; in order for there to be a spiritual and enlightened Orient, there must be a demonic and despotic Orient. The demonization of the Chinese in this process is yet a further manifestation of the continuing Orientalist romance of Tibet. For a detailed study of the relations between Tibet and China in the decades preceding the invasion of 1950, see Melvyn C. Goldstein, *A History of Modern Tibet, 1913–1952: The Demise of the Lamaist State* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1989).
- 33 For a provocative discussion of Tibet as a society that consumed the general surplus from its “general economy” in monastic institutions at the expense of military might, see Georges Bataille’s essay, “The Unarmed Society: Lamaism,” in his *The Accursed Share*, trans. Robert Hurley (New York: Zone Books, 1988), 1: 93–110.
- 34 Following the illuminating discussion of Jean and John Comaroff, I take “hegemony” to be “that order of signs and practices, relations and distinctions, images and epistemologies – drawn from a historically situated cultural field – that come to be taken-for-granted as the natural and received shape of the world and everything that inhabits it” while “ideology” (citing Raymond Williams in *Marxism and Literature* [Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1977]) is “an articulated system of meanings, values, and beliefs of a kind that can be abstracted as ‘worldview.’” See Jean Comaroff and John Comaroff, *Of Revelation and Revolution: Christianity, Colonialism, and Consciousness in South Africa* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1991), 1: 23–24. The processes by which the ideology of Buddhism became hegemonic in Tibet have yet to be explored. The rule of Byang chub rgyal mtshan in the mid-fourteenth century and the rule of the fifth Dalai Lama in the mid-seventeenth century would appear to be particularly important moments.
- 35 See Müller, *Chips from a German Workshop*, 1: 115–16.
- 36 George E. Marcus, “Contemporary Problems of Ethnography in the Modern World Systems,” in *Writing Culture: The Poetics and Politics of Ethnography*, ed. James Clifford and George E. Marcus, (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1986), p. 165, n. 1.
- 37 E. E. Evans-Pritchard, *Social Anthropology* (London: Cohen & West, 1951), p. 79; George Marcus and Dick Cushman, “Ethnographies as Texts,” *Annual Reviews of Anthropology* 11 (1982). 36.
- 38 See Melvyn C. Goldstein, “A Study of the Ldab Ldob,” *Central Asiatic Journal* 9, no. 2 (1964): 125–41.
- 39 George Devereux, *From Anxiety to Method in the Behavioral Sciences* (New York: Humanities Press, 1967), p. 234.
- 40 In this sense, what I was doing bears little resemblance to the anthropologist’s “interview” in which “native metacommunicative repertoires” are often ignored. For a critique of the interview techniques employed by anthropologists, see Charles L. Briggs, *Learning How to Ask: A Socio-linguistic Appraisal of the Role of the Interview in Social Science Research* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986).
- 41 Michel Foucault, *The Archaeology of Knowledge*, trans. A. M. Sheridan Smith (New York: Pantheon, 1972), p. 221.
- 42 See my “Authority and Orality in the Mahāyāna,” *Numen* 42, no. 1 (1995): 21–47.
- 43 Jacques Derrida, *Of Grammatology*, trans. Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1976), p. 44.
- 44 On the problem of the unenlightened retrieving the intention of the Enlightened One, see my “On the Interpretation of the Mahāyāna Sūtras” in *Buddhist Hermeneutics*, ed. Donald S. Lopez, jr., (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1988), pp. 47–70. The book that resulted from my dissertation research, *A Study of Svātantrika*, (Ithaca, N.Y.: Snow Lion, 1987) has since been certified as an authentic representation of dGe lugs learning on the topic by its inclusion in the standard curriculum of the Namgyal Monastery Institute of Buddhist Studies in Ithaca, New York, which, according to its brochure, “provides an opportunity for the systematic study in English of Tibetan Buddhism in a traditional monastic setting.”

- 45 Michel Foucault, *The Birth of the Clinic. An Archaeology of Medical Perception*, trans. A. M. Sheridan Smith (New York: Vintage, 1973), p. xvi.
- 46 Robert Young, *White Mythologies: Writing History and the West* (London: Routledge, 1990), p. 168.
- 47 E. E. Evans-Pritchard, *Theories of Primitive Religion* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1965), p. 3.
- 48 Tucci, *To Lhasa and Beyond*, pp. 32–33.
- 49 Robert Thurman writes that the Tibetans “had the living, continuously returning incarnation of this Buddhist ‘God of Love’ watching over them, politically and spiritually protecting them from the powers of evil, while educationally fostering their own best use of their precious jewels of human existence. They were at the center of their own highest evolutionary potential.” See his “The Dalai Lamas of Tibet: Living Icons of a Six-hundred-year Millennium,” *Tibet Journal* 8, no. 4 (Winter 1983): 18. The years during which Tibet was actually “ruled” by a Dalai Lama are far less than commonly imagined. Based on Shakabpa’s *Tibet: A Political History* (New York: Potala, 1984), it can be calculated that from the time that the fifth Dalai Lama assumed temporal power in 1642 until the signing of the Seventeen Point Agreement making Tibet part of the People’s Republic of China in 1951, Dalai Lamas served as rulers of Tibet for 111 years of this 309-year period, as follows. Dalai Lama V: 1642–82; Dalai Lama VI: 0; Dalai Lama VII: 1751–57; Dalai Lama VIII: 1781–1804; Dalai Lama IX: 0; Dalai Lama X: 0; Dalai Lama XI: 1855–56; Dalai Lama XII: 1873–75; Dalai Lama XIII: 1895–1933; Dalai Lama XIV: 1950–51.
- 50 See Johannes Fabian, *Time and the Other: How Anthropology Makes Its Object* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1983).
- 51 Michel de Certeau, *Heterologies: Discourse on the Other*, trans. Brian Massumi, *Theory and History of Literature*, vol. 17 (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1986), pp. 68–69, 78.
- 52 As Bourdieu notes, “Nothing is more paradoxical, for example, than the fact that people whose whole life is spent fighting over words should strive at all costs to fix what seems to them to be the one true meaning of objectively ambiguous, overdetermined or indeterminate symbols, words, texts or events which often survive and generate interest just because they have always been at stake in struggles aimed precisely at fixing their ‘true’ meaning.” See Pierre Bourdieu, *The Logic of Practice*, trans. Richard Nice (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 1990), p. 17.
- 53 *Ibid.*, p. 96.

THE FIELD

Donald S. Lopez, Jr.

Source: D. Lopez, *Prisoners of Shangri-La: Tibetan Buddhism and the West*, Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1998, pp. 156–80 and notes pp. 261–7.

In a 1977 survey of the available Western language scholarship on Tibetan Buddhism, the noted Sinologist Michel Strickmann identified what he perceived as a dangerous trend: “a far more serious threat to the interests of the non-specialist, in my opinion, emanates from a mass of new writings that ostensibly deal with Tibetan Buddhism or Buddhist Tāntra. Though sometimes adorned with hitherto respectable names, many of these books appear in reality to be no more than tracts telling harassed Americans how to relax.”¹ Strickmann refers to the commingling of the scholarly and the popular, a trend that, [as we have seen], has a long history in the Western encounter with Tibet. It is a trend, also, that has only grown and diversified since Professor Strickmann bemoaned its existence two decades ago. This chapter will survey the development of Tibetan Buddhist Studies as an academic field in North America. Focusing especially on the changes that occurred in the wake of the Tibetan diaspora that began in 1959, it will attempt to demonstrate some of the ways in which the production of knowledge is always partial, always undertaken within the determining confines of time, place, and cultural climate.²

In the academic study of Tibetan Buddhism, perhaps differing only in degree from other academic fields, the popular is never wholly absent. But there is, indeed, a difference in degree, for a number of reasons. First is the fact that for most of its history, Tibet has been regarded as somehow peripheral by its neighbors. For India, it has been the place beyond the forbidding Himalayan range, a place of mythical kingdoms and divine abodes. For the various Chinese, Mongol, and Manchu dynasties, it has been a distant, somewhat unrefined yet magically potent neighbor, sometimes imagined as part of their empires, sometimes not. For the British and the Russians of the late nineteenth century, it was the land just beyond the borders of their empires, a place to be mapped by spies. Even the Tibetans have participated in this perception, portraying their land in both Buddhist and Bönpo histories as a wild and uncivilized place to which culture was introduced only from the outside, whether from Buddhist India or Bönpo Zhang Zhung.

The perception of Tibet as peripheral has persisted in large part because until the second half of this century Tibet was never colonized, not by the Chinese, Mongol, Manchu, British, or Russian empires. One of the many products of colonialism is knowledge, produced first by explorers and merchants, then by colonial officers and

missionaries, later by specialists in archives and institutes in the metropole and colleges and universities in the colony. No such institutions emerged in Tibet until after the Chinese invasion and occupation that began in 1950. Hence, there was no factory for the production of official knowledge, leaving only unofficial knowledge, produced by travelers and enthusiasts, “gifted amateurs.” Among trained Orientalists of the nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries, classical Tibetan was almost always a secondary language, learned by the Indologist to read translations of Sanskrit texts, learned by the Sinologist to read an edict on one of the four faces of a tetraglot stele or to read the non-Chinese manuscripts among the huge cache discovered in the caves and temples of Dunhuang in western China.³

Indeed, it was only after the Tibetan diaspora that began in 1959 that the study of Tibetan Buddhism “in its own right” began to be accepted as a legitimate academic field. This occurred as Tibetan lamas made their way, under various auspices, to North America and began to attract American and Canadian students. It was the more dedicated of such students who went on to form the greatest pool of graduate students for the newly founded programs in Buddhist Studies, who were to receive the first doctorates, and who were to compete for the increasing number of academic positions in Asian religion, having to suffer the effects of the perception of Tibet and its Buddhism as peripheral, somehow less central than the religions of India or China or Japan.

Buddhist Studies, as a recognized academic discipline, came into existence only in the present century. It began in Europe as an offshoot of Oriental philology, in which scholars of Sanskrit also read Buddhist texts. Many of these works were first made available in Europe by Brian Houghton Hodgson, the British resident to the Court of Nepal, who in 1837 dispatched bundles of Sanskrit manuscripts from his post in Kathmandu to the great libraries of Europe. The first scholar to make extensive use of Hodgson’s gift was the French scholar Eugène Burnouf, who translated the *Lotus Sutra* into French; it was published posthumously in 1852. It was this translation and his 1844 *Introduction à l’histoire du Bouddhisme indien* that introduced Mahayana Buddhism to European and American intellectuals, among them Wagner and Thoreau. From that point on, a growing number of scholars concerned themselves with Buddhist literature, debating such questions as whether the original teachings of the Buddha were preserved in Sanskrit or in Pali, and later considering such doctrinal questions as whether or not nirvana is a state of utter annihilation.⁴

Beyond the work of Burnouf (and several others), the literature of Buddhism did not reach a significant Anglophone audience until the publication in the last decades of the nineteenth century of The Sacred Books of the East series, which was “translated by Various Oriental Scholars and edited by F. Max Müller.” Among the fifty volumes in the series, seven were devoted to Buddhist works, for the most part works from Pali, but also a Chinese translation of Āśvaghoṣa’s life of the Buddha, another translation of the *Lotus Sutra*, and a volume entitled *Buddhist Mahāyāna Texts*, which included the same life of the Buddha, this time translated from the Sanskrit, the *Diamond Sutra*, the *Heart Sutra*, and the shorter and longer Pure Land sutras. None of the works in The Sacred Books of the East were of Tibetan authorship, nor were they translated from the Tibetan.

This is not to suggest that Tibetan works were entirely neglected during the nineteenth century. In 1837 Isaac Jacob Schmidt published a French translation of the *Diamond*

Sutra from the Tibetan, followed in 1843 by a translation of the *Sutra on the Wise Man and the Fool*. In 1847 Philippe Édouard Foucaux (1811–1894) published his French translation of a Tibetan translation of a Sanskrit life of the Buddha, the *Lalitavistara*.⁵ The most significant work on Tibetan Buddhist literature to appear during this period, however, was that of Alexander Csoma de Kőrös, the Hungarian scholar who published a Tibetan-English dictionary and a survey of the Tibetan Buddhist canon.⁶ Nonetheless, during the nineteenth century scholarly interest in Tibet was focused largely on those works that shed light on Indian Buddhism, that is, the various Tibetan canons of Sanskrit works translated into Tibetan, and Tibetan histories (*chos 'byung*) of Indian Buddhism.⁷

In the United States, the diplomat William Woodville Rockhill, who had traveled extensively in China and Tibet, published in 1892 *Udanavarga: A Collection of Verses from the Buddhist Canon* and in 1907 *The Life Of the Buddha and the Early History of His Order, Derived from Tibetan Works in the Bkash-hgyur and Bstan-hgyur*. In 1942 Ferdinand Lessing of the University of California at Berkeley published *Yung-ho-kung, An Iconography of the Lamaist Cathedral in Peking, with Notes on Lamaist Mythology and Cult*; he later collaborated with Alex Wayman on the translation of an important Geluk survey of tantra *Mkhas grub rje's Fundamentals of the Buddhist Tantras*. Tibetan Buddhist Studies, however, did not become established in North America until the 1960s (after the diaspora). Its major figures were David Seyfort Rugg, Herbert Guenther, and David Snellgrove.⁸

The study of Tibetan Buddhism received its first substantial philanthropic support in the United States when the Rockefeller Foundation provided funds to bring the distinguished Sakya scholar Deshung Rinpoche to the University of Washington in 1960. In 1961 the first graduate program in Buddhist Studies was established at the University of Wisconsin, under the direction of Richard Robinson, an American who had received his doctorate from the School of Oriental and African Studies of the University of London, where he wrote a dissertation later published as *Early Mādhyamika in India and China*. The students that Robinson produced filled many of the positions in Buddhist Studies that opened at American colleges and universities during the late 1960s and early 1970s. The students included Lewis Lancaster, Stephan Beyer, Francis Cook, Jeffrey Hopkins, Roger Corless, Steven Young, Dennis Lishka, Charles Prebish, Douglas Daye, Stefan Anacker, and Harvey Aronson. Some remained in the field, some went on to other professions. Those who remained in the field of Buddhist Studies generally found positions not in departments of Sanskrit or Classics or Oriental Languages, as would have been the case in Europe, but in departments of Religion or Religious Studies, a shift that would significantly affect both the direction and the form that Buddhist Studies and, in particular, Tibetan Buddhist Studies would take in North America.⁹

The growth of Religious Studies as an academic discipline in the United States has been largely a postwar development, with especial growth during the 1960s. During the late nineteenth century, various anthropologists and students of “culture” (one immediately thinks of Frazer and Tyler) were examining certain practices of non-Western societies, practices that they identified as “religious.” The work of such scholars, often identified as “history of religions,” “comparative religion,” or “world religions,” paid much attention to the evolutionary development of religions from the animistic and fetishistic to the polytheistic and then to the monotheistic. Christianity was largely

exempted from such studies, being regarded as the culmination of religious evolution when it was regarded as a “religion” at all. The study of Christianity was thus generally confined to theology faculties in Europe and to seminaries and divinity schools in the United States.

The expansion and liberalization of the humanities curriculum in United States after the Second World War led to the study of Christianity being established in public universities and moved out of the divinity schools of private universities. There was a perceived need to wean the curriculum in Religious Studies from the seminary model, to mitigate Protestant dominance by including Catholic and Jewish Studies, and to take into account non-Christian religions.¹⁰ However, in the formation of the curriculum of Religious Studies, much of the structure of the seminary faculty was retained. A typical seminary would offer training in Biblical Studies (Old Testament and New Testament, with their attendant languages), Church History, Theology, and Ethics, along with Pastoral Counseling and Homiletics. In the typical department of Religious Studies at a college, there would be positions in Old Testament, New Testament, Church History, Theology, and Ethics, although the names were sometimes changed. Old Testament could be subsumed under Jewish Studies, Church History sometimes became “Religion in America,” and Theology would become “Religious Thought” or “Philosophy of Religion,” the latter placing particular emphasis on Feuerbach and Kierkegaard. To this core was added “World Religions” or “Comparative Religion,” designed to cover the non-Judeo-Christian world – that is, among the “world religions,” Islam, Hinduism, Buddhism, Confucianism, Taoism, and sometimes Shinto. Larger or more prosperous institutions might also add positions in Psychology of Religion (where William James, the Freud of *The Future of an Illusion*, and Jung received particular attention) and Sociology of Religion (where Weber and Durkheim were regarded as the founders). Religious Studies in the United States (and perforce Buddhist Studies) therefore was concerned largely with questions of meaning, interpreting texts to discover beliefs and worldviews. In Europe, however, where Buddhist Studies remained firmly within the long tradition of Oriental studies and philology, meaning in this sense was far less important than the ostensibly more simple commitment to the further accumulation of knowledge.

With the rise of the colonial powers during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries the list of the great religions slowly lengthened. In order to qualify, each (if at all possible) should have a founder, an organized hierarchy of priests, a canon of sacred texts, and a set of defining “beliefs.” The first to be admitted was Islam, which like Judaism and Christianity regarded Abraham as its progenitor; then Confucianism, for its ethics, and Hinduism, or at least “classical Hinduism,” for its mystical philosophy; and “original” Buddhism, for its rationality and individualism. But the religion of Tibet, as discussed in the first chapter, remained largely unknown except from outside. Catholic missionaries accepted the Chinese view that the religion practiced at the Manchu court was not Confucianism, not Taoism, and not Buddhism, but rather *lama jiao*, the sect of the lamas, or “Lamaism.” For European scholars of the Victorian period, the religion of the Tibetans was not authentically Buddhist. As Waddell wrote, “the Lamaist cults comprise much deep rooted devil worship, which I describe in some fullness. For Lamaism is only thinly and imperfectly varnished over with Buddhist symbolism, beneath which the sinister growth of poly-demonist superstition darkly appears.”¹¹

Tibetan Buddhism was thus largely excluded from the realm of “comparative religion” and “comparative philosophy”; when one surveys anthologies of “world philosophy” or various renditions of the perennial philosophy or peruses journals such as *Philosophy East and West* one rarely finds a Tibetan name, either the name of an ancient Tibetan philosopher or of a modern Tibetan arguing his case.¹² As mentioned above, this is largely because Tibet never became a European colony or fell under direct European influence. Thus, in Tibet, there was no attempt to “modernize” by establishing universities, importing European technologies, or sending elites to Europe for education.¹³ The absence of Western colonial institutions in Tibet prevented Tibetan scholars from producing Western forms of knowledge. Since Tibet was not a European colony, institutes, libraries, archives, and museums were not created, either in Tibet or in a European metropole. In his account of the British invasion of Tibet in 1903 and 1904, L. Austine Waddell, chief medical officer during the invasion, made a prediction that never came true: “In the University, which must ere long be established under British direction at Lhasa, a chief place will surely be assigned to studies in the origin of the religion of the country.”¹⁴ This also impeded the teaching of European languages in Tibet and the teaching of the Tibetan language in Europe. At the same time, the Buddhism most valued in Europe was that which was controlled by Europe and long dead in Asia, Indian Buddhism. As described in the first chapter, it was this Buddhism, especially in its Pali form, that European scholars regarded as the “original” or “true” Buddhism, and in comparison to which Tibetan Buddhism was judged a late and corrupted form. All of these factors have contributed to the general exclusion of Tibetan Buddhism from the discourse of comparative religion and philosophy.¹⁵

With the growing commitment to adding non-Christian religions to the Religious Studies curriculum, graduates of Robinson’s Buddhist Studies program at Wisconsin were well suited for the World Religions positions in the new and growing departments of Religious Studies. Because Buddhism was the one “pan-Asian” religion, scholars with training in Buddhist Studies had to know something of the traditions of the culture in which Buddhism had developed (India) and of those cultures to which it had migrated (China and Japan). (Other regions in which Buddhism held sway, such as Southeast Asia, Tibet, and Korea, received less attention prior to the 1980s.) Thus, when there was only one opening in World Religions in a given department, the Buddhologist was well positioned to fill it. Even when departments expanded to include an Islamicist or a specialist in Hinduism, there was often a position for someone in Buddhist Studies as well. Some of the larger departments subscribed to what was referred to as the “zoo theory,” staffing a department with scholars of each of the major world religions, in some cases seeking scholars who were themselves adherents of those traditions. Positions in Jewish Studies were almost always filled by Jews. Positions in Islamic Studies have increasingly come to be held by Muslims (of Middle Eastern or South Asian ancestry). Positions in Buddhist Studies are often held by Buddhists, but, as will be discussed below, these Buddhists have generally been of the white variety.

Regardless of the number of “non-Western” positions, however, the majority of positions were still those inherited from the seminary model. As a result, the agenda of the scholarship was largely a reflection of its particular concerns, with research and teaching directed toward the exegesis of “sacred texts” and on “worldview” or “belief.” In producing his scholarship, however, the Buddhologist among the Christians was

faced with a dilemma. The texts that he dealt with (the scholars of this generation were generally male) often presented daunting philological and historical problems, the solutions to which, when finally found, were generally of such a technical nature that they appeared hopelessly arcane to the Buddhologist's undergraduate students as well as to his colleagues in the Department of Religious Studies. It was therefore common, both in teaching and in scholarship (especially in the United States), to turn away from the details of doctrine and institution and instead to look back toward their putative source, the experience of meditation. Few scholars of this period would question the declaration by Edward Conze, an influential Buddhologist of the 1960s, that "each and every [Buddhist philosophical] proposition must be considered in reference to its spiritual intention and as a formulation of meditational experiences acquired in the course of the process of winning salvation."¹⁶

Of particular interest for the development of the field of Tibetan Buddhist Studies is the career of Jeffrey Hopkins, who came to Robinson's program in Wisconsin only after having received considerable training in Tibetan Buddhism elsewhere. Hopkins had gone to Wisconsin on the advice of his teacher, Geshe Wangyal (1901–1983), whose influence on the current state of Tibetan Buddhist Studies in the United States is difficult to overstate. Geshe Wangyal was born in what is today Kalmykia, the region between the Black Sea and the Caspian Sea populated by the Kalmyks, a Mongol people who in the seventeenth century emigrated there after the Mongols retreated from their European conquests. The Kalmyks are Tibetan Buddhists. Geshe Wangyal was born there in 1901 and ordained as a Buddhist monk at the age of six. He excelled at his studies and was chosen by the prominent Buryat Mongol lama Agvan Dorzhiev to travel to Tibet to enroll at Drepung monastery. He arrived in Lhasa in 1922 and remained for nine years, completing the monastic curriculum. He intended to return to Kalmykia to teach, but en route learned of the Bolshevik persecutions of Buddhist institutions. He remained in Beijing for some years, serving as translator for Sir Charles Bell (1870–1945, British political officer for Sikkim, Bhutan, and Tibet) during his travels in China and Manchuria. He later traveled to India and met the British mountaineer Marco Pallis, with whom he spent four months in England in 1937. During the Second World War, he divided his time between India and Tibet. With the first news of the Chinese invasion of Tibet, he left Tibet for good and moved to Kalimpong in Sikkim.¹⁷

By that time a community of Kalmyk immigrants had been established in Freewood Acres, New Jersey. During the Second World War, the Kalmyks, who had been brutally persecuted under the Soviets, sided with the Germans. One group followed the Germans in their retreat from the Soviet Union, finding themselves in Austria when the war ended. This group was allowed to emigrate to New Jersey rather than being repatriated to the Soviet Union to suffer Stalin's revenge. With their community established, they sought a monk to perform religious functions. In 1955 Geshe Wangyal arrived. Like so many Buddhist monks who first came to the United States to serve a refugee community, Geshe Wangyal soon attracted the attention of Americans interested in Buddhism. It became known to the Asian enthusiasts of Manhattan and Boston that there was a Tibetan lama living in New Jersey. Among the most enthusiastic were Robert Thurman and Jeffrey Hopkins, both of whom left Harvard to live at Geshe Wangyal's Lamaist Buddhist Monastery of America in 1963. Geshe Wangyal accompanied Thurman to India, where in 1965 he was the first American to be

ordained as a Tibetan Buddhist monk. After Thurman returned to the United States, Geshe Wangyal encouraged him to return to Harvard, where he completed his B. A. and Ph.D. He is currently the Jey Tsong Khapa Professor of Buddhist Studies at Columbia University.

After ten years of study with Geshe Wangyal, Hopkins enrolled in the graduate program in Buddhist Studies at the University of Wisconsin, where he and Robinson established Tibet House, a place for students of Tibetan Buddhism to study with visiting refugee Tibetan lamas. After Robinson's death in 1971, Hopkins went to India to conduct his dissertation research. Living in Dharamsala, he soon attracted the attention of the Dalai Lama, who was impressed both by Hopkins's fluent Tibetan as well as his substantial knowledge of Madhyamaka philosophy. In 1972 Hopkins returned to the United States, where he completed his doctorate. In 1973 he was hired as a member of the Department of Religious Studies at the University of Virginia. At that time the University of Virginia had one of the fastest growing departments of Religious Studies in North America, in the early years of the decade adding positions in Islam, Buddhist Studies, Hinduism, and Chinese Religions, along with Psychology of Religion and Philosophy of Religion. Hopkins had an immediate impact, teaching courses on Buddhist philosophy and meditation to huge classes, even attracting twenty students to his course in classical Tibetan, ten of whom survived the first semester. Hopkins's specialty was Madhyamaka philosophy; his massive dissertation, *Meditation on Emptiness*, which was later published as a book, became the bible (in its University Microfilms International form) for a growing number of students. Some went so far as to have a rubber stamp made that read "Does Not Inherently Exist," which they stamped everywhere from their foreheads to the urinals in the Department of Religious Studies' men's room. During his second semester, he brought to campus a Tibetan lama, Khetsun Sangpo, from Dharamsala. In courses with titles like "Buddhist Meditation" and "Buddhist Yogis," the lama lectured to scores of students, speaking in Tibetan, pausing after each sentence for Hopkins to translate. This was to become the paradigm of the Virginia program. It was the learning of the lamas that was being passed on to the students, either in this mode of near-simultaneous translation or with Professor Hopkins reporting what he had heard or read in his prodigious studies with many of the leading Tibetan scholars of the refugee community. In this way the legendary oral tradition of Tibetan Buddhism, long locked in its Himalayan keep, appeared, as if magically, in a classroom in Charlottesville, Virginia. Tibetan lamas, long absent, were now present.

But refugee lamas were not the only sources of Tibetan learning to materialize in Charlottesville (and elsewhere). Thousands of Tibetan texts also appeared. Under Public Law 480, the government of India agreed that its huge debt to the United States for shipments of American wheat provided for famine relief would be repaid in the form of books. Specifically, beginning in 1961, a designated number of copies of every book published in India were to be provided to the Library of Congress, which would then distribute them to select regional depository libraries, including Alderman Library at the University of Virginia. To the eternal good fortune of Tibetan Studies, the head of the Library of Congress in New Delhi from 1968 to 1985 was E. Gene Smith, an eminent Tibetologist trained at the University of Washington. Through his efforts, thousands of heretofore unknown Tibetan texts, texts that had been brought out of Tibet in the diaspora, were published in India and sent to depository libraries

across the United States. In this way, the long mysterious Tibetan archive became, as if magically, manifest in the stacks of American university libraries.

In 1976 the Department of Religious Studies added a track in “History of Religions” to its graduate program. The students enrolled in this track were almost exclusively Hopkins’s students of Tibetan Buddhism. Early on, Hopkins discovered that these students had difficulty understanding and, especially, remembering the multiple relations between the myriad categories of Buddhist philosophy that were deemed essential in the Geluk monastic curriculum. In an effort to remedy this problem, he taught students to memorize the Tibetan definitions of some of the most basic terms used there. Thus a pot (the standard object about which qualities such as impermanence are posited) was “that which is bulbous, splayed-based and performs the function of holding water” – as difficult to say in Tibetan as it is in English. “Impermanent” was defined as “momentary.” “Phenomenon” was defined as “that which bears its own entity.”

With these simple definitions memorized, it was then possible to construct simple syllogisms, such as “The subject, a pot, is impermanent because of being momentary.” Here pot was called the subject, impermanent was the predicate, and being momentary was the reason. In order for the syllogism to be true, the reason had to be a quality of the subject – that is, the pot had to be momentary – and there had to be “pervasion” between the category of the reason and the category of the predicate; that is, whatever was momentary had to be impermanent. Hopkins would test the students by saying in Tibetan, “It follows that whatever is momentary is necessarily impermanent,” and the students would answer, “There is pervasion.” Or he would say, “It follows that whatever is a phenomenon is necessarily impermanent,” to which the students would answer, “There is no pervasion.” He would say, “posit,” meaning “posit something that is a phenomenon and is not impermanent,” and the students would say, “the nonproduct space,” because they knew that the definition of the nonproduct space is “the absence of obstructive contact.” Because such an absence did not change moment by moment, it was not impermanent, but was rather permanent. In this way the students developed a rudimentary command of the categories of the elementary monastic curriculum, learning the kinds of things that novice monks learned in Tibet.

It may be useful to describe briefly the nature of the Geluk monastic curriculum in Tibet, upon which Hopkins modeled the Virginia program. Monasteries were often large and complex institutions serving many functions in traditional society, only one of which was the training of scholars; moreover, only certain monasteries offered such training. The majority of the monks in any given monastery were not actively engaged in philosophical training; even in the large teaching monasteries of the major sects, it has been estimated that only 10 percent of the monks undertook the study of the philosophical curriculum.

The monastic curriculum of the three major Geluk monasteries (Drepung, Sera, and Ganden) took from fifteen to twenty-five years to complete. After learning to read and write (usually beginning between the ages of seven and twelve), a monk would study elementary logic, set forth in a series of three textbooks called the small, intermediate, and large “path of reasoning” (*rigs lam*). The first of these introduced students to the mechanics of the syllogism (technically closer to an enthymeme) through the topic of colors, traditionally beginning with the statement “It follows that whatever is a color is necessarily red,” which would be followed by a statement designed to

demonstrate the error of such a position: “It follows that the subject, the color of a white conch, is red because of being a color.” The *Small Path of Reasoning* proceeded through chapters on color, “objects of knowledge” (*shes bya*), identification of the reverse (*ldog pa ngos 'dzin*), opposites, cause and effect, and so on, providing increasingly difficult exercises in logic while simultaneously adding to the student’s store of definitions and categories of technical terms. After completing the study of the three paths of reasoning students would move on to study “types of awareness” (*blo rigs*), which introduced the basic categories of Buddhist epistemology, and “types of reasons” (*rtags rigs*), which provided further instruction in logic. The training in the “collected topics,” “types of awareness,” and “types of reasoning” took from one to five years.

These works constituted the preparation for the core of the Geluk curriculum, the study of five Indian treatises known simply as the “five texts.” The first was the *Ornament of Realization* (*Abhisamayālamkāra*), attributed to Maitreya, which was studied for four to six years. The work purports to present the “hidden teaching” of the Perfection of Wisdom sutras, that is, the structure of the path to enlightenment. It is for the most part a list of terms known as the “seventy topics,” each of which has multiple subcategories. There are, for example, twenty varieties of the aspiration to buddhahood (*bodhicitta*). The second text was the *Introduction to the Middle Way* (*Madhyamakāvātāra*) of Candrakīrti, a work organized around the ten perfections of the bodhisattva path, but the bulk of which is devoted to the sixth, the perfection of wisdom. This chapter forms the *locus classicus* of Madhyamaka philosophy for the Gelukpas. It was studied for two to four years. The third work was the *Commentary [to Dignāga’s Compendium on] Valid Knowledge* (*Pramāṇavarttika*) of Dharmakīrti. Its logical categories are studied in a synthetic form in the “paths of reasoning” and “types of reasoning” textbooks. Monks of the three great monasteries would convene annually at Jang to debate about Dharmakīrti’s text. This text contains arguments for the existence of rebirth, for liberation from rebirth, and for the omniscience of a buddha; discussions of the two valid sources of knowledge (direct perception and inference); classifications of proof-statements; and an analysis of the operations of thought. Written in a cryptic poetic style, it is considered one of the most difficult Indian *śāstras* and thus was a particular favorite of the most elite scholar-monks. The fourth text was the *Treasury of Knowledge* (*Abhidharmakośa*) of Vasubandhu, a compendium of Hinayana doctrine, providing the basis for Buddhist cosmology and karma theory, among other topics. It was studied for four years. The final work, also studied for four years, was the *Discourse on Vinaya* (*Vinayasūtra*) of Gunaprabha, providing the rules of monastic discipline.

The successful completion of the entire curriculum took some twenty years of study. During this time the educational techniques were two: memorization and debate. It was customary for a monk over the course of his study to memorize the five Indian texts, his college’s textbooks on the Indian texts, and Tsong kha pa’s major philosophical writings; it was not uncommon for an accomplished scholar to have several thousand pages of Tibetan text committed to memory. This repository of doctrine was mined in the second educational technique of the monastic university, debate. Debate took place in a highly structured format in which one monk defended a position (often a memorized definition of a term or an interpretation of a passage of scripture) that was systematically attacked by his opponent. Skill in debate was essential to progress to the highest rank of academic scholarship, and was greatly

admired. Particular fame was attained by those monks who were able to hold the position of one of the lower schools in the doxographical hierarchy against the higher. These debates were often quite spirited, and certain debates between highly skilled opponents are remembered with an affection not unlike that which some attach to important sporting events in the West. It was commonly the case that a monk, adept at the skills of memorization and debate, would achieve prominence as a scholar without ever publishing a single word.

At Virginia, Jeffrey Hopkins derived the graduate program in Buddhist Studies from this model. However, unlike in Tibet, where the entire day of study could be devoted to this curriculum, at Virginia there were other subjects that needed to be studied (Indian Buddhism, East Asian Buddhism, Sanskrit, History of Religions, a second religion, etc.), such that only the language classes in classical Tibetan could be consigned to the monastic curriculum. This severely truncated the amount of material that could be studied and absorbed. As the program eventually developed, students would begin with the *Small Path of Reasoning*; the first thing they would learn to say in Tibetan was “It follows that whatever is a color is necessarily red.” They would move in the first year through a selection of topics from the *Small Path of Reasoning*, memorizing the definitions and divisions, as well as the debates. Unlike in Tibet, however, the students never really learned to improvise in their debating, but merely repeated what they had memorized, like a conversation drill in a Spanish textbook. Whereas in Tibet the passive and active sides of the intellect were exercised in memorization and debate, respectively, at Virginia even the debating was passive. The second year of classical Tibetan was devoted to the study of “types of awareness” and “types of reasoning,” the third year to a “stages and paths” textbook, and the fourth year was left open, often devoted to a tantric text.

Whenever possible, a prominent Geluk scholar-monk, selected by the Dalai Lama, was invited to Charlottesville for a semester or a year to teach these and other classes, with Professor Hopkins, as always, providing sentence-by-sentence translation. On Friday afternoons and weekends, the Tibetan monk would teach meditation, first in a space provided by a local church and later at Hopkins’s home. The graduate students of the program were regular participants in these sessions. Thus the notion of belonging to a tradition of scholarship that had been the model in Europe, a tradition that extended back to the great Orientalists of the nineteenth century, was replaced by a far more ancient model, in which the master was not *der Doktor-vater* but the lama, whose tradition, it is said, can be traced back to the Buddha himself.

The other topics of the monastic curriculum, that is to say, the formal study of the five texts, remained largely untouched; the four years of graduate study provided enough time to complete only the preliminary elements of the curriculum. Madhyamaka and Yogācāra philosophy, two of Professor Hopkins’s areas of expertise, were studied in English-language seminars, and here some of the content of Candrakīrti’s *Introduction to the Middle Way* was touched upon. But generally speaking, students would complete their graduate coursework with only a partial command of the material that would be required of a twelve-year-old monk enrolled in the scholastic curriculum of a Geluk monastery. Students completed the program with the ability to read one type of technical scholastic literature. One of the skills that was sacrificed in the process was a solid foundation in Sanskrit, long the lingua franca of Buddhist Studies, as it remains in Europe and Japan. It would be unthinkable there for a student to

undertake the study of Tibetan without a strong knowledge of Sanskrit. In the United States, at least at Virginia, the requirements in Sanskrit were minimal, the focus being on the received tradition of Tibetan renditions of Buddhist doctrine.

This ability was put to use in the writing of the dissertation. In Tibetan Buddhist scholastic literature there is a genre called *grub mtha'* often translated as “doxography.” Its texts are compendia of the doctrines of the various schools of Indian philosophy. While works of this genre sometimes include summaries of the doctrines of non-Buddhist schools of classical Indian philosophy such as Jaina, Sāṃkhya, Nyāya, and Carvāka, the bulk of the exposition is concerned with the Buddhist schools, which are generally numbered as four: the two Hinayāna schools of Vaibhāṣika and Sautrāntika, and the two Mahāyāna schools of Yogācāra (generally referred to as Cittamātra, “mind only” – *sems tsam*, in the doxographical literature) and Madhyamaka. The Tibetans brought their own approach to the study of Buddhist philosophy, cataloging the positions of the various Indian schools, ranking them, and comparing their assertions on a wide range of topics. Despite the fact that Vaibhāṣikas and Sautrāntikas never had adherents in Tibet and the Cittamātra view was only occasionally espoused, studies that move up through this hierarchy are considered, especially in the Geluk sect, to have a strong pedagogic and even soteriological value; the exposition begins with Vaibhāṣika and moves toward Prāsaṅgika-Mādhyamika. The tenets of the lower schools are seen as stepping stones to the higher, as a means of understanding increasingly subtle philosophical positions, providing an opportunity to discern a development and refinement of concepts and terminology that would be imperceptible if study were limited to what is judged by many to be the most profound, the Prāsaṅgika-Mādhyamika. The Tibetan doxographies are very much constructions of the Indian schools and to that extent artificial. They are largely ahistorical, juxtaposing and amalgamating positions that were often separated by centuries. They are also synthetic, erecting “schools” for which in India there is sometimes insufficient historical evidence.¹⁸

Professor Hopkins would assign a portion of one of these works to a doctoral student as his or her dissertation topic. For example, I was assigned the Svātantrika section of Jamyangshayba's ('Jam dbyang bzhad pa) *Great Exposition of Tenets* (*Grub mtha' chen mo*) and Anne Klein was assigned the Sautrāntika chapter. The task that Hopkins set for his students was “getting it straight,” a multistage process that began first with coming up with a rough translation of the assigned text. We each would meet with Hopkins once a week to go over our translation with him and have it corrected (an extremely labor intensive task, requiring him to keep up with a number of different texts at once). We would discuss doctrinal points with him, sometimes in connection with an early-nineteenth-century work of annotations on Jamyangshayba's text. We regarded the authors of the works we studied as great masters. Our goal was to understand their thought by partaking in a lineage of scholarship. In the case of my own dissertation, that lineage, moving from the present to the past, flowed to me from Professor Hopkins, from his own teachers, from the author of the nineteenth-century annotations, from Jamyangshayba in the eighteenth century, from Tsong kha pa in the fourteenth century, and then from Indian masters from Kamalaśīla, from Candrakīrti, from Nāgārjuna, and from the Perfection of Wisdom sutras, traditionally regarded as the word of the Buddha himself. To seek to use the understanding gained from this lineage as a foundation for one's own evaluation and critique was considered presumptuous and somehow unseemly. It would be impossible for us to

ever surpass their understanding; our task was to represent it accurately in English. This approach was in part borrowed from the tradition itself, in which a high premium is placed on a profound and detailed understanding of doctrine, especially of the Madhyamaka. It is the Geluk position, supported with copious quotations from Indian texts, that there is no higher philosophical position than that put forward by Nāgārjuna, and that in order to be liberated from rebirth it is necessary to have a full understanding of that position, eventually in meditation but initially in a discursive way. Thus, in the accurate translation and exposition of Buddhist philosophy we could also partake in a form of salvation by scholarship.

At the same time, we would be applying to the appropriate funding agencies (at that time, the American Association of Indian Studies and the U.S. Office of Education through the Fulbright-Hays Doctoral Dissertation Abroad program) for support for our doctoral research. Here, because of politics both international and scholarly, a degree of dissimulation was called for. The government of India did not permit research in Tibetan refugee communities because of political sensitivity over relations with China. At the same time, research on Tibetan Buddhism did not have the cachet of Sanskrit studies. For that reason, doctoral students from the Virginia program submitted proposals for projects that involved the translation of a Sanskrit text (that also existed in Tibetan translation), and asked to be based not in Dharamsala or in refugee monasteries in Karnataka State (which were barred to foreigners) but, for example, at Delhi University, which had the only Department of Buddhist Studies in India. With the grant successfully in hand, it was then possible to make extended visits to Tibetan communities to study at the feet of refugee Tibetan lamas. In our work with them we felt that in a sense we were doing what the Tibetans had done when, during the tenth century, they brought Buddhism to their land of snows. After their arduous trip across the mountains to India, they studied with the great Indian masters and then returned home to translate their works into Tibetan. In the same way we had crossed the ocean to India to study with Tibetan masters, now in exile there, and upon returning to America would translate texts based on their teachings. In that way we both preserved the wisdom of these masters and made the dharma available in English.¹⁹ The precedent for this had been set earlier in the century by Evans-Wentz.²⁰

Meanwhile, at the University of Wisconsin after the untimely death of Richard Robinson, one of the Tibetan scholars originally brought to America by Geshe Wangyal and invited to Wisconsin by Jeffrey Hopkins during his graduate studies there was hired as an assistant professor in the Department of South Asian Studies. This was Geshe Lhundup Sopa, a monk of Sera monastery. Now a professor emeritus, he is at this writing the only Tibetan geshe (the highest degree in the Geluk curriculum) ever hired as a tenured faculty member at a college or university in North America. Together, Jeffrey Hopkins and Geshe Sopa published a volume that included translations of two works: a commentary on Tsong kha pa's poem on the three aspects of the path to enlightenment (renunciation, the aspiration to buddhahood, and the understanding of emptiness) and a brief doxography of the schools of Indian Buddhist philosophy. It was published under the apparently hyperbolic title of *Practice and Theory of Tibetan Buddhism* (later revised as *Cutting through Appearances*).

As a highly regarded product of the monastic curriculum described above, the many graduate students that Geshe Sopa trained tended in their dissertations to focus on works of Geluk scholastic philosophy. The other places in North America where

one could study Tibetan Buddhism at the graduate level in the 1970s and 1980s, such as the University of Washington, the University of California at Berkeley, Indiana University, and the University of Saskatchewan, produced far fewer graduates than Wisconsin and Virginia, which remained the primary centers of Tibetan Buddhist Studies during this period.²¹ In these decades, then, it was perhaps not much of an overstatement to represent the *Practice and Theory of Tibetan Buddhism* with two works from just one Tibetan sect, the Geluk, because the bulk of the scholarship being produced at that time focused on the Geluk sect, an effect that can be traced back to Geshe Wangyal, a Geluk monk who was the forefather of the programs at Virginia and Wisconsin and the teacher of Robert Thurman. Indeed, one might say that during this century the most important figure in Tibetan Studies in Great Britain was David Snellgrove, that in France it was Marcelle Lalou or Rolf Stein, and that in North America it was Geshe Wangyal. This has had a profound effect on the history of Tibetan Studies.

Most of the graduates of the Virginia and Wisconsin programs eventually found academic positions; they often described their speciality with the neologism “Indo-Tibetan Buddhism,” perhaps in an attempt to counter the old view of Tibet as a marginal civilization of Asia. In time, however, such precautions have seemed unnecessary, as Tibet has come more and more into the forefront of popular attention with the repeated visits of the Dalai Lama to the United States. The graduates of these programs have gone on to constitute a distinct class in the history of American Buddhism, an American version of what in Tibetan is called the “scholar-adept” (*mkhas grub*), that is, scholars who are also Buddhist practitioners. In Tibet, such persons were generally monks and almost always male. In America, they are almost always laypeople, and sometimes female. This peculiar feature of American Buddhism, at least when compared to the Buddhisms of Asia, derives largely from the fact that American Buddhism lacks a significant monastic component.

The histories of Buddhist nations traditionally tend to revolve around the founding of monasteries. In Tibet, for example, when King Tri Songdetsen wanted to establish Buddhism in his realm, he invited an abbot from India to found a monastery. It was his attempt that enraged the gods and demons of Tibet, requiring that Padmasambhava be called in to subdue them. Only then could the momentous act of founding a monastery succeed. Buddhist history and Buddhist texts agree that without monks there can be no Buddhism, a view supported by Buddhist myths of the endtime. In the last stages of the degeneration of the dharma, it is said that all Buddhist texts will disappear (the last to go will be those on monastic discipline), the saffron robes of the monks will turn white (the color of the robes of the laymen), and, in the end, all of the relics of the cremated Buddha – the teeth, the bones, the fingernails, the hair – will break free from their reliquaries, the stupas and pagodas, and magically travel to Bodhgaya, where they will reassemble beneath the tree where the Buddha achieved enlightenment. There they will be worshipped one last time by the gods before they burst into flames and vanish.

In Asia, the distinction between monk and layperson is generally sharply drawn, even in Japan, where, since the Meiji era, monks have married. The distinction is not so much about celibacy, although outside Japan the pretense of celibacy (and its attendant misogyny) remains important. The distinction is instead one of a division of labor. The role of the monk is to maintain a certain purity, largely through keeping an

elaborate set of vows. Such purity renders the monk as a suitable “field of merit” to whom laypeople can make offerings, thereby accumulating the favorable karma that will result in a happy rebirth in the next life. By adopting a certain lifestyle, then, in which the transient pleasures of married life are renounced, monks provide the opportunity for the layperson to amass a certain karmic capital. In return, monks receive the fruits of the labor of the laity – labor that they themselves have eschewed – in the form of their physical support. More specifically, monks do what laypeople cannot do because they generally do not know how: recite texts, perform rituals, and sometimes meditate. Laypeople do those things that monks are forbidden to do: till the soil, engage in business, raise families. (In Tibet, where lay and state support for monks was less generous than in some Theravada countries, monks often engaged in commerce, either individually or on behalf of the monastery.)

In America, white Buddhists have not observed this distinction. Instead, American Buddhists, whether Zen, Theravadin, or Tibetan, have always wanted to do what monks do, but without becoming monks. Or perhaps it is more accurate to say that they have wanted to do some of the things monks do. They have been less interested in performing rituals, but have had a keen interest in reading and studying texts and in meditating. It is partly due to these interests and partly because of their wealth that American Buddhists have often been able to lure Asian monks away from the refugee communities they were brought to the United States to serve, founding instead “dharma centers” where the clientele is largely not of Asian descent.

But even now there are not always enough Asian masters to go around. Some Western men and women have become monks and nuns, but generally they have not attracted large groups of followers. American nuns in Tibetan traditions have led the movement to reestablish the order of fully ordained nuns, a movement motivated by a complicated feminism that seeks to restore the place of women in a patriarchal hierarchy in which a man who has been a monk for fifteen minutes is senior to a woman who has been a nun for fifteen years. But the impact in America of American monks and nuns has been relatively minor, in large part because there is no institution to support them. Life in America with shaved head and robes is a difficult one, with much time spent explaining to the uninformed that one is not a Hare Krishna; there is no established *sangha* in the United States (outside of a few communities) in which one can easily live as a monk or nun. Furthermore, many of those who have become monks and nuns in the Tibetan tradition have never learned to read Tibetan sufficiently to receive the requisite sanction from a Tibetan lama to teach or the requisite renown to attract American followers. Tibetan is difficult to learn outside of an academic setting. Those Western monks who spend long periods in Korea or India or Sri Lanka, who learn the language and the texts sufficiently to be qualified as teachers in Asia, rarely remain monks when they come back home, finding a more appropriate role in the academy, as scholars (witness, for example, Robert Thurman, Robert Buswell, José Cabezón, Georges Dreyfus). Many who remain monks and nuns in the United States derive their authority from their garb, but they would not have the credentials of a teacher in a traditional Buddhist society. And thus, in a strange way, the traditional role of the monk, as dispenser of Buddhist wisdom and interpreter of texts, has been arrogated to the academic, those students of Geshe Wangyal, Geshe Sopa, and other Tibetan lamas who have received the sanction to teach, not necessarily by virtue of the symbolic capital derived from traditional transmission

(although this was often also there), but by virtue of symbolic capital derived from their possession of a doctorate in Buddhist Studies.

In order to continue in their positions, however, the new scholar-adepts also had to meet the demands of the institutions that paid their salaries. It was easy enough to attract large numbers of students to courses like "Introduction to Buddhism," where the dual role of scholar and adept only served to boost enrollments. (During my younger and more supple years, I would annually wow my students by demonstrating the lotus posture during a lecture on meditation.) But it was also necessary to publish. In the 1970s and 1980s, the established academic presses in Europe and America, and even the commercial presses, failed to recognize the growing market for Tibetan Buddhism. Oxford University Press had kept the old Evans-Wentz tetralogy in print, but little else had been added to its list over the decades. Four new presses were founded to meet the growing need, each connected with a particular refugee Tibetan lama.

The first was Shambhala Publications, founded in Berkeley in 1969 and named after the mythical Himalayan kingdom where the practice of tantric Buddhism is preserved in preparation for an apocalyptic war. In 1970 it published what would become its most successful title, *The Tassajara Bread Book* by Zen baker Edward Brown, and in 1975 it published what would become a New Age classic, Fritjof Capra's *The Tao of Physics*. Its most notable author in the early years, however, was Chögyam Trungpa, the Kagyü lama who settled first in Vermont and then in Boulder, Colorado. Works like *Cutting through Spiritual Materialism* (1973) brought Trungpa's urbane interpretation of Tibetan Buddhism to a large and enthusiastic audience; his followers eventually established a network of centers called "dharmadhātus," with a headquarters in Boulder. Trungpa's followers were highly organized, with local and national officers, appointed by Trungpa, including a Minister of External Affairs who was responsible for relations with those outside Trungpa's community.²² Shambhala Publications also brought out translations of the works of a group of Trungpa's disciples, called the Nālandā Translation Committee. The press eventually added titles in Islamic mysticism and New Age psychology, with less emphasis on Tibetan Buddhism beyond the works of Trungpa. Few of Trungpa's disciples received doctorates in Buddhist Studies, and his influence on the academic study of Tibetan Buddhism largely has been limited to the small Buddhist Studies program at his Naropa Institute in Boulder.

The next press to be founded (in 1971) was Dharma Publishing, based in Berkeley, California. Its original and continuing purpose has been to publish the works produced by the Nyingma Institute under the direction of Tarthang Tulku. Dharma's publishing program has included works by Tarthang Tulku himself, such as *Time, Space, Knowledge* (1977), as well as the work of his largely anonymous group of disciples, who, under his direction, have brought out the multivolume traditional history of Buddhism called *Crystal Mirror*. In addition, the works of several European Buddhologists have been reprinted by Dharma (Christian Lindtner's *Nagarjuniana* was published as *Master of Wisdom*), as well as English translations of Tibetan works originally translated into French (such as Foucaux's 1847 translation of the *Lalitavistara*, published as *The Voice of the Buddha*). Several of Herbert Guenther's works, including his 3-volume *Kindly Bent to Ease Us*, were also published by Dharma. By far the most ambitious venture undertaken by Dharma was the publication of the Derge edition of the Tibetan canon, beautifully bound in 120 volumes and selling for \$15,000. Unfortunately, although great expense was taken in the binding of the volumes,

insufficient care was given to the reproduction of the contents, hurriedly photocopied from the blockprint edition housed in the University of California library. As a result, many folios are illegible, rendering the Nyingma edition an excellent canon to prostrate before (as Tibetan Buddhists often do) but a poor canon to read (as Tibetan Buddhists rarely do).

The next press was Wisdom Publications, founded in 1975 and now headquartered in Boston. It began as a publishing organ for the teachings of the Geluk *tulku* Thupten Yeshe (1935–1984, known as Lama Yeshe), who, along with Thupten Sopa, founded Kopan and Tushita, popular dharma centers outside of Kathmandu and Dharamsala, respectively, and later centers around the world. Thupten Yeshe attracted a large number of students with his engaging teaching delivered in an idiomatic English, commenting on a wide variety of Buddhist and non-Buddhist works, including the Christmas carol “Silent Night” in a work called *Silent Mind, Holy Mind*. The followers of Lama Yeshe and Lama Sopa were organized into a network of dharma centers around the world under the umbrella of the Foundation for the Preservation of the Mahāyāna Tradition (FPMT). Wisdom Publications published works by the Dalai Lama, as well as Jeffrey Hopkins’s massive dissertation, *Meditation on Emptiness*. The press has also published a wide variety of titles on Buddhist practice, including translations from the Pali.

The last press to be established was Snow Lion Publications (originally Gabriel/Snow Lion) in 1980 in Ithaca, New York. The press was founded by Gabriel Aiello, Pat Aiello, and Sidney Piburn shortly after the Dalai Lama gave teachings there in 1979. The group took an early interest in the work of Jeffrey Hopkins and his students and conceived the idea of a press that would be devoted to the preservation of Tibetan Buddhism and Tibetan culture. Despite initial financial hardship, Snow Lion has gone on to become the largest press devoted to Tibetan Buddhism, having published almost 150 titles on Tibet and Tibetan Buddhism (printing over one million copies) and distributing over 500 titles published by other presses. In addition, Snow Lion distributes hundreds of video- and audiotapes of teachings by Tibetan lamas; *thangkas*; statues of buddhas; ritual items such as *vajras*, bells, and rosaries; software for Tibetan fonts; and T-shirts, posters and postcards connected to Tibetan culture. The press has been particularly committed to publishing works by the Dalai Lama (edited transcripts of public teachings), such as *Kindness, Clarity, and Insight* (1984), which has sold over fifty thousand copies. Despite the relatively small market, Snow Lion has also been committed to publishing the dissertations of Jeffrey Hopkins’s students, with such arcane titles as *A Study of Svātantrika*. Over the years, Snow Lion has sought to balance its initial Geluk emphasis by publishing translations from the other sects of Tibetan Buddhism. Most of the translators of these works are Westerners (often under the tutelage of a Tibetan lama) associated with dharma centers in Europe, America, or Nepal who do not hold academic positions. Its periodical newsletter, in which these products are marketed, is a major forum for advertisements for meditation retreats and appeals for aid by various Tibetan refugee religious groups. Recognizing the success of these presses, other more established houses, both academic (such as SUNY and the University of California Press) and commercial (such as HarperCollins, which in 1994 started a Library of Tibet) increased their titles in Tibetan Buddhism.

In another case of the confluence of the scholarly and the popular, it is these presses, founded to serve the growing popular interest in Buddhism in Europe and

America, that have published much of the North American scholarship on Tibetan Buddhism produced during the last three decades. Furthermore, the preponderance of this scholarship has centered on works of the Geluk sect, for a number of reasons. First, Jeffrey Hopkins, who headed the Virginia program, studied with many prominent Geluk scholars, such that most of his own prolific scholarship and that of the first generation of his students focused on Geluk texts. Because Geshe Sopa was a Geluk monk, the same was true of his students at Wisconsin. However, this research also needed to be published. Here the graduates benefited from the fact that two of the new “dharma presses,” Wisdom and Snow Lion, had strong ties to the Geluk, especially in their early years.

But this politics of knowledge becomes clearer when we compare the circumstances of the production of scholarship on Tibet at the end of the nineteenth century with the circumstances today. It was at the end of the nineteenth century that the two most widely used Tibetan-English dictionaries were produced. One was compiled by a Moravian missionary, H. A. Jäschke, in Ladakh, the other by a Bengali scholar, Sarat Chandra Das, who made several spying expeditions into Tibet on behalf of the British. This was a time when Tibet was coveted as a potential mission field and as a potential colony, both of which require knowledge of the Tibetan language. As we saw in chapter one, Tibet was often portrayed during this period as a corrupt and static society and its religion was largely denigrated in scholarly literature as a debased form of the original Buddhism of India, contaminated with magic, shamanism, and priestcraft to the extent that it should not properly be called Buddhism. Similar characterizations of Asian, African, and New World cultures often provided an ideological justification for colonialism.

This perspective began to change after the diaspora of 1959, with a more historically based variation on the Theosophical theme of Tibet as a domain in which ancient wisdom was held in safekeeping for the modern age. The view of Tibet as a closed society that had so fascinated and vexed European travelers in the colonial period now became a reason why Tibetan Buddhism was more authentic than any other. Tibet had never been colonized as had India and Southeast Asia, had never been “opened” to the West as had China and Japan, had never suffered a revolution as had occurred in China in 1911 and 1949, and had never attempted to adopt Western ways, as had Japan since the Meiji. Rather, Tibet was seen to have resisted all foreign influence, its monasteries having forced the thirteenth Dalai Lama to close down the English-language school in Lhasa, to abandon his plans to train a modern army, and to discourage the introduction of European sports by proclaiming that he who kicks a soccer ball kicks the head of the Buddha.

All of this meant that the Buddhism of Tibet was pure and this purity derived in large part from a connection with the origin, which Tibetans themselves often invoked. Like other Buddhist traditions, the Tibetan based claims to authority largely on lineage, and in its case claimed that the Buddhism taught in Tibet in 1959 could be traced in an unbroken line to the eleventh century, when the founders of the major Tibetan sects made the perilous journey to India to receive the dharma from the great masters of Bengal, Bihar, and Kashmir, who were themselves direct recipients of teachings that could be traced to the Buddha himself. Moreover, this lineage was represented as essentially oral, with instructions being passed down from master to disciple as unwritten commentary on sacred text. Now that lineage was in danger of

extinction. For the oral tradition not to be lost, locked within the minds of aged and dying refugee lamas, it had to be passed on, and the scholar-adepts of North America dedicated themselves to the task.

It is the old legacy of religion and magic, India and Tibet, Buddhism and Lamaism that perhaps has caused the current generation of scholars of Tibetan Buddhism (especially in North America) generally to shy away from certain genres of Tibetan literature (propitiation of malevolent deities, exorcism texts, and works dealing in general with wrathful deities or mundane ends) and to gravitate to others (works on meditation, the bodhisattva path, and scholastic philosophy), texts that demonstrate unequivocally that the chief religion of Tibet is a direct and legitimate descendent of Indian Buddhism. The study of such works exalts the Tibetan Buddhist tradition in precisely those domains from which Tibetan Buddhism was so long excluded, the domains of the world religions, gaining for their scholarly experts academic positions that once would have gone to specialists in Indian or East Asian Buddhism. Simultaneously, Tibetan Buddhism, with its ethical systems, regimens of meditation, and profound philosophies, is demonstrated to have something to contribute to the discourse of Religious Studies, a discipline with deep roots in confessional Christianity and its emphasis on doctrine and belief. The Western scholar can thus promote a sympathetic portrayal of Tibetan Buddhism, write books that are bought by American Buddhists, and win tenure in the process; publication of one's dissertation by one of the once-scorned "dharma presses" has since proved sufficient for tenure in a number of cases.²³

Something that was unthinkable in the late nineteenth century has become possible in the late twentieth: the curriculum of a Tibetan monastery has become the model for a doctoral program in the United States. The greatest Tibetologist of the twentieth century, Giuseppe Tucci, described the Tibetan monastery as a place where "Hardening of the arteries set in with the double threat of formulas replacing the mind's independent striving after truth, and a withered theology taking the place of the yearning for spiritual rebirth".²⁴ The products of those monasteries were now teaching in the classrooms of American universities and graduate students were memorizing the formulas of their theology. And now that Tibet was no longer the object of European or American imperial desire, another side of Tibetan religion has become subject to the scrutiny of scholars (often working in concert with exiled lamas), the side of logic, philosophy, hermeneutics, ethics, and meditation, all of which demonstrated the depth and value of Tibetan civilization precisely at the moment when it seemed most in jeopardy.

During the last decade these scholars have benefited greatly from a three-volume Tibetan-Tibetan-Chinese dictionary, published under Chinese colonial auspices in 1985. When an American scholar does not know the meaning of the words in the Tibetan definition, he or she can always open the Tibetan-English dictionaries compiled a century ago by the missionary and the spy.

Notes

- 1 Michel Strickmann, "A Survey of Tibetan Buddhist Studies," *Eastern Buddhist* 10 (1977): 128.
- 2 This chapter will not consider the fascinating history of Tibetan Studies in Europe during this century. Such history would recount, for example, the circumstances (such as the presence of the Dunhuang manuscripts in Paris) that have led Tibetologists in Europe (especially in

France) to focus largely on pre-Buddhist Tibet and the fall of the Tibetan monarchy, producing excellent studies in which Buddhism is sometimes portrayed (as it is in some Bönpo histories) as an alien influence that brought an end to authentic Tibetan culture. In his study, *The Yar-lun Dynasty*, Erik Haarh writes:

When, at last, Buddhism got a foothold in Tibet, its influence, however, became the very reason for the fall of the Dynasty and the disintegration of the Yar-lun Empire. This was not the result of a general mollification or pacification of the Tibetan mentality, but because Buddhism became a destructive agent to the spiritual life and tradition of the Tibetan people. To the Tibetan kings, adhering to Buddhism for the purpose of making their authority independent of the ancient national traditions, which at the same time meant its very basis and its restriction, Buddhism became disastrous, ruining the Dynasty in its own defeat against the last display of strength of the aboriginal traditions.

See Erik Haarh, *The Yar-lun Dynasty: A Study with Particular Regard to the Contribution by Myths and Legends to the History of Ancient Tibet and the Origin and Nature of Its Kings* (Copenhagen: Gad, 1969), p. 12.

The other emphasis in France has been on “popular” practice, such as ritual and pilgrimage, again generally eschewing Buddhist scholastic practice in Tibet, which, as will be considered below, has been the general focus in North America. A history of Tibetan Studies in Europe would also consider the circumstances that caused the study of Bön (today largely centered in Oslo under Per Kvaerne and in Paris under Samten Karmay) to be stronger in Europe than it has been in North America.

- 3 For an eloquent and learned argument for the importance of Tibetan for the study of Indian Buddhism, see David Seyfort Rugg, *The Study of Indian and Tibetan Thought* (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1967).
- 4 For an account of this controversy, see Guy Richard Welbon, *The Buddhist Nirvana and Its Western Interpreters* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1968).
- 5 See J. W. de Jong, *A Brief History of Buddhist Studies in Europe and America*, 2d (ed.), *Biblioteca Indo-Buddhica*, no. 33 (Delhi: Sri Satguru, 1987), p. 21.
- 6 For a discussion of Csoma, with references to other studies of his life and work, see Donald S. Lopez, Jr., *Curators of the Buddha: The Study of Buddhism under Colonialism* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1995), pp. 256–59.
- 7 See Narendra Nath Bhattacharya, *History of Researches on Indian Buddhism* (New Delhi: Munshiram Manoharlal, 1981), pp. 129–32.
- 8 For a useful survey of Western-language scholarship on Tibetan religions up to 1977, see the bibliographic essay by Michel Strickmann, “A Survey of Tibetan Buddhist Studies,” *Eastern Buddhist* 10 (1977): 128–49.
- 9 For recent discussions and critiques of past and current paradigms in the field of Buddhist Studies, see Luis O. Gómez, “Unspoken Paradigms. Meanderings through the Metaphors of a Field,” *Journal of the International Association of Buddhist Studies* 18, no. 2 (winter 1995): 183–230; and José Ignacio Cabezón, “Buddhist Studies as a Discipline and the Role of Theory,” *Journal of the International Association of Buddhist Studies* 18, no. 2 (winter 1995); 231–68.
- 10 See Clyde A. Holbrook, “Why an Academy of Religion” *Journal of Bible and Religion* 32. (1964): 97–105; reprinted in *Journal of the American Academy of Religion* 59, no. 2 (summer 1991): 373–87. See also John F. Wilson, “Developing the Study of Religion in American Colleges and Universities,” *Journal of General Education* 20, no. 3 (October 1968): 190–208.
- 11 Waddell, *Tibetan Buddhism*, p. xi.
- 12 Tibetan Buddhism was placed in the tradition of perennial philosophy in 1968 by Huston Smith in his film *Requiem for a Faith* (Hartley Film Foundation). There amid a psychedelic kaleidoscope of sideways mantras and a Japanese painting of a buddha, Smith narrates: “Tibetans painted the truth.” He explains that “Separate selfhood is a fiction. . . . Our real identity is with Being as a whole, the scheme of things entire. . . . We become compassionate not from altruism which denies the self for the sake of others but from insight that sees and

feels that one is the other.” In fact, the most famous argument for compassion in Tibet is that put forward by the eighth-century Indian scholar Śāntideva, who argues precisely that to practice compassion is to deny the self for the sake of the other. Smith continues in this neo-Vedantin tone by stating that “the deepest insights of Tibetan Buddhism are not foreign to any of them [the alternative religions of man].” In fact, it is the position of the Geluk sect that enlightenment is impossible unless one gains direct realization of emptiness as it is set forth by Candrakīrti (as understood by Tsong kha pa).

Smith’s film is famous as the first recording of the chanting of overtones by Tibetan monks. The subsequent history of the representation of this skill (Smith explains that “overtones awaken numinous feelings”) remains to be written.

- 13 There were limited and unsuccessful attempts by the thirteenth Dalai Lama. In 1913 he sent four boys from aristocratic families to England to study. In the early 1920s a telegraph line was established between Lhasa and Gyantse, the machinery for a hydroelectric plant was purchased from England, and weapons were purchased from the British with which to modernize the Tibetan army. In 1924 an English-language school was established in Gyantse. However, it closed in 1926 (and efforts to modernize the military ceased) under pressure from the powerful Geluk monasteries. Another English-language school, designed to train wireless and hydroelectric technicians, opened in 1944 but it was closed under similar pressures after six months. See Melvyn C. Goldstein, *A History of Modern Tibet, 1913–1951: The Demise of the Lamaist State* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1989), pp. 120–38, 158–62, 421–26.
- 14 Waddell, *Lhasa and Its Mysteries* (New York: Dover Publications, 1905), pp. 47–48.
- 15 This situation, however, has recently begun to change in the decades following the Tibetan diaspora, as Tibetan Buddhism belatedly confronts modernity. The Dalai Lama, for example, has become an active participant in the Buddhist-Christian dialogue and the Buddhist-Jewish dialogue. In the domain of comparative philosophy, we find works being published (by Wisdom Publications) such as Peter Fenner’s 1995 *Reasoning into Reality: A System-Cybernetics Model and Therapeutic Interpretation of Buddhist Middle Path Analysis*. But as in other confrontations between Tibetan Buddhism and modernity, the way has once again been led by Robert Thurman. In his 1984 *Tsong Khapa’s Speech of Gold in the Essence of True Eloquence. Reason and Enlightenment in the Central Philosophy of Tibet*, he writes of Wittgenstein, “Yet, the critical insight he achieved and cultivated on his own was already highly developed and systematically cultivated in a great tradition with many thousands of members in India, Tibet, Mongolia, China, and Japan. One aspect of our first ‘western renaissance’ was our discovery of the hidden treasures of Greek thought. Our second renaissance may now well come from our discovery of the even greater resources of Asian thought.” See Robert A. F. Thurman, *Tsong Khapa’s Speech of Gold in the Essence of True Eloquence: Reason and Enlightenment in the Central Philosophy of Tibet* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1984), p. 111. See also his statement on page 79 that “Tsong Khapa precedes Wittgenstein by centuries in the exquisite and liberative understanding of the surface.”

Here, in a standard strategy of the comparative philosopher, Thurman claims that Wittgenstein’s insights had been in the possession of Asian masters for centuries. And like Schlegel two centuries before and Seal one century before, he also predicts another renaissance. Thurman thus attempts to legitimate Tsong kha pa and Tibetan philosophy by showing that it is just as profound as anything thought by Wittgenstein, the most sublime of modern philosophers. Furthermore, the West is trumped by the fact that Tibetans knew what Wittgenstein knew centuries before his birth. What is being posited, then, is a universal truth that the East (specifically Buddhists) has always possessed and that the West may soon gain access to. Buddhists thus appropriate both the origin and the telos.

Thurman next moves to subsume Western philosophical discourse within a Buddhist model: “Indeed, it may be that Berkeley and Hegel and Heidegger and so on will someday be claimed by Europe as representatives of the Maitreya lineage of magnificence, as Hume and Kant and Nietzsche and Wittgenstein and so on may be claimed to represent the Manjushri lineage of the profound. . . . They should be included in the refuge-field icon we are constructing under which to read this *Essence*” (p. 21). Western philosophy is thus subjugated by subsumption.

- For a trenchant review of Thurman's book, see Paul Williams, "Tsong Khapa's Speech of Gold," *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies* 49 (1986): 299–303. On "comparative philosophy," see Donald S. Lopez, Jr., *Elaborations on Emptiness: Uses of the Heart Sutra* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1996), pp. 239–60.
- 16 Edward Conze, *Thirty Years of Buddhist Studies* (London: Bruno Cassirer, 1967), p. 213. For a powerful critique of the rhetoric of experience in Buddhist Studies, see Robert H. Sharf, "Buddhist Modernism and the Rhetoric of Meditative Experience," *Numen* 42 (1995): 228–83.
- 17 For a brief biography of Geshe Wangyal, see the preface to the new edition of his *The Door of Liberation*, rev. ed. (Boston: Wisdom Publications, 1995), pp. xxi–xxvii.
- 18 Perhaps the most striking instance of such a construction is the Svātantrika and Prasangika, terms that do not appear as the names of branches of Madhyamika in any Indian text, but rather were coined in Tibet, probably in the late eleventh century. Later Tibetan scholars disagreed over what constituted the difference between the two subschools, which Indian figures belonged to which, and which of the two should be ranked above the other.
- 19 I have described my own experiences in this regard in an essay entitled "Foreigner at the Lama's Feet," in *Curators of the Buddha: The Study of Buddhism under Colonialism*, (ed.) Donald S. Lopez, Jr. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1995), pp. 251–95.
- 20 It was an enterprise of which Lama Govinda apparently would have approved. He wrote in his 1955 foreword to *The Tibetan Book of the Dead*:

In times of old . . . "no one would have undertaken to translate a text who had not studied it for long years at the feet of a traditional and authoritative exponent of its teaching, and much less would anyone have thought himself qualified to translate a book in the teachings of which he did not believe."

Our modern attitude, unfortunately, is a complete reversal of this; a scholar is regarded as being all the more competent ("scholarly") the less he believes in the teachings which he has undertaken to interpret. The sorry results are only too apparent, especially in the realm of Tibetology, which such scholars have approached with an air of their own superiority, thus defeating the very purpose of their endeavours.

Lāma Kazi Dawa-Samdup and Dr. Evans-Wentz were the first to reestablish the ancient method of Lotsavas (as the translators of sacred texts are called in Tibet). They approached their work in the spirit of true devotion and humility, as a sacred trust that had come into their hands through generations of initiates, a trust which had to be handled with the utmost respect for even the smallest detail.

See Lama Govinda, introductory foreword to Walter Y. Evans-Wentz, *The Tibetan Book of the Dead* (London: Oxford University Press, 1960), p. IXIII.

- 21 It is noteworthy that the graduates of the programs at Washington and Indiana, where the Tibetologists were European-trained scholars (David Seyfort Rugg and Helmut Hoffmann, respectively), produced work that was closer to the European model than did the graduates of Virginia and Wisconsin. The graduates of the program at Saskatchewan were influenced by the approach of their teacher, Herbert Guenther.
- 22 Trungpa Rinpoche was often a controversial figure. For one view, see Peter Marin, "Spiritual Obedience," *Harper's*, February 1979, 43–58.
- 23 Two recent cases of such sympathetic scholarship are Robert Thurman's *Essential Tibetan Buddhism* (San Francisco: HarperSanFrancisco, 1995); and John Powers's *Introduction to Tibetan Buddhism* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Snow Lion Publications, 1995). Like so much of the work produced by American students of Tibetan Buddhism, both books have a bias that is both scholastic and Geluk (suggested by the photograph on the cover of Powers's book of the five Geluk scholar-monks, complete with "yellow hats").

Thurman's book is part of Harper SanFrancisco's Essential Series, which includes volumes such as *Essential Zen*, *The Essential Tao*, *The Essential Koran*, *The Essential Kabbalah*, *The Essential Jesus*, and *The Essential Rumi*. The contents of Thurman's volume suggest that he believes that the essential Tibetan Buddhism is Geluk and scholastic. Of the thirty-two

works in the volume, thirteen are Geluk (including six from Tsong kha pa), twelve are not Tibetan but Indian works (such as the *Heart Sutra* and selections from Śāntideva), and only seven are by non-Geluk Tibetan authors (of these, one consists of four lines from Gampopa, another, eight lines from Sachen Gunga Nyimpö). The Geluk bias is also evident in the length of the selections, with some 140 pages devoted to Geluk works (over half of these from Tsong kha pa), yet only roughly 30 pages are given to non-Geluk Tibetan authors. Indeed, there are twice as many pages from Indian texts (including a long extract from Nāgārjuna's *Pañcakrama*, particularly important in Geluk tantra) than there are from non-Geluk Tibetan authors.

In Powers's book, the scholastic perspective is evident in the 25 percent of the book that is devoted to Indian Buddhist doctrine, as well as in the summaries of the four "schools" of Tibetan Buddhism, in which the philosophical and contemplative discourse of the most elite monks and lamas remains the focus. Even the chapter "Festivals and Holy Days" is devoted largely to the monastically dominated (and Geluk) events of the Monlam festival held to celebrate the New Year in Lhasa and the festival of the butter sculpture at Kumbum. The ordinary practices of the majority of Tibetans, monks, nuns, and laity, are consigned to a three-page section in the chapter on Bön entitled "Animism in Tibetan Folk Religion" (pp. 432–34). Elsewhere, whether it is in the discussion of tantra or the stages of death, the Geluk position is that which is presented, with occasional quotations from texts and teachers from other sects provided as embellishments. In both books the discussion of Tibetan history is derived largely (and uncritically) from traditional Buddhist sources, failing to note, for example, that the existence of the Nepalese bride of Srong btsan sgam po and the persecutions of Glang dar ma have been called into question.

- 24 Giuseppe Tucci, *To Lhasa and beyond; Diary of the Expedition to Tibet in the Year 1948* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Snow Lion Publications, 1987), pp. 32–33.

OLD AGE TIBET IN NEW AGE AMERICA*

Frank J. Korom

Source: F. J. Korom (ed.), *Constructing Tibetan Culture: Contemporary Perspectives*, Quebec: World Heritage Press, 1997, pp. 73–97.

Prologue

In the fall of 1995, I walked into my “Anthropology of Religion” course on first day of class and spotted a cheerful female student wearing a peculiar necklace consisting of a delicate gold chain attached to a small Tibetan *rdo-rje* (thunderbolt). In this age of *phur-pa* letter openers (Klieger n.d.), mail order mysticism (*Pacific Spirit* 1995), Shangri-La pinball machines (Oppitz 1974), and specially brewed beer blessed by Tibetan *lamas*,¹ it does not seem unusual that a young American would be wearing a sacred object as secular ornamentation in the light of the fact that Tibetan ritual implements have permeated the mass media during recent years; they have even made their way into popular Hollywood films such as *The Shadow*, in which a magical *phur-pa* in the possession of a villainous incarnation occasionally comes alive to terrorize the hero of this celluloid adaptation of the well-known comic strip.² What is unique however, is her explanation for why she wears the *rdo-rje*. When asked, she stated: This thing is an ancient Buddhist object of power that draws in cosmic healing forces. When I wear it, it keeps me healthy and happy. It grounds me in the center and makes me feel protected from all the negative *karma* in the universe.” So my assumption was wrong! She did not wear the object as a fashion statement; rather, she imbued it with a personal and mystical meaning, much in the same way as a Christian wearer of a cross or scapular might.

Nevertheless, her comment has to be taken in the context of the social circles in which she moves. She is not a Buddhist, nor is she an initiate of Tantra. Instead, she is, as she put it, “seeker looking for the common good in all religions.” Her perspective of what Agehananda Bharati has termed “hypertrophical eclecticism” (1975: 129) is central to a pattern of religious behavior prevalent in the global New Age movement today. Moreover, it echoes the sentiments of the many Western pilgrims who continuously travel to Dharamsala, the hub of Tibetan culture in exile, in the hopes of absorbing fragments of Buddhist wisdom to add to their eclectic store of personal knowledge about New Age spirituality. Sitting in the pubs and restaurants of this picturesque Himalayan hamlet, the ethnographer often overhears Westerners engaged in metaphysical conversations liberally drawing not only on Tibetan philosophy but

also on Georgei Ivanovitch Gurdjieff, Paramahansa Yogananda, Bhagwan Rajneesh, Yogi Bhanan, Satya Sai Baba, Meher Baba, as well as a host of other teachers who have successfully attracted the attention of Western audiences.

The idiosyncratic combination of various – and sometimes contradictory – strands of thought culled from mystics and sages throughout the world is one of the trademarks of the New Age and is a point to which I shall return below. But the main aim of this chapter is to explore some of the ways in which Tibet and portions of its religious culture have been appropriated over time by proponents of the New Age for their own purposes. Before proceeding with this task, it will be useful to locate and define the term “new age.”

Precursors of the New Age

While most scholars (e.g., Chandler 1991; Melton 1988: 35) agree that the New Age movement in all of its splendor and glory crystallized after the 1960s, the heyday of psychedelic drugs (cf. Carey 1968; Watts 1962) and “flower power” in the United States (Prebish 1979: 28–40), its roots are to be found in Europe during the previous century.³ As John Lash has stated, “The New Age as it appears today has its immediate roots in the utopian socialist movements of the nineteenth century” (1990: 52). Indeed, the social utopians of Ham Common in England used the term as a name for their homegrown journal as early as 1843. This highly localized usage seems to be the first deliberate coinage of “new age” to label a form of alternative social and spiritual consciousness not bounded by conventional religion (Lash 1990: 54). The use of the term in the Ham Common context was, however, vague and open to speculation. But by the turn of the twentieth century, a British journalist named A. R. Orage (1873–1934) founded a liberal periodical titled *The New Age* to deal with the cultural, political, and literary issues of the day. In addition to his many social interests, Orage was also involved with spiritualism and the occult. Later, in 1914, he became a disciple of the aforementioned Gurdjieff (1963), whose own path of enlightenment was an amalgam of teachings drawn from what he termed his “meetings with remarkable men.”⁴ Orage’s commitment to pursuing an alternative, esoteric spiritual path was characterized by the same eclecticism that marked his mentor’s mystical style and the experimentations of later New Age seekers; that is, the quest was not bound by the teachings of any given master, lineage, or even religion (cf. Webb 1988).

Orage’s impact on the later emergence of the movement was not great, but he must be given credit for his solid introduction of the term “new age,” which allowed others following him to utilize and play with the concept. Although Tibet did not play a major role in his own thought, the year he died, 1934, was the year that the British New Age proponent Alice Bailey (1880–1949) began to write down messages she was receiving telepathically from a spirit known simply as “The Tibetan.” The foreword to her book of his mentally projected teachings begins with him transmitting the following in 1934: “Suffice it to say, that I am a Tibetan disciple of a certain degree. . . . I live in a physical body like other men, on the borders of Tibet, and at times (from the esoteric standpoint) preside over a large group of Tibetan lamas” (Bailey 1968: vii). The Tibetan’s first communique revealed to Bailey a millenarian vision of the coming of a New Age during the cosmic transition from Pisces to Aquarius, at which time the problems of humankind would be solved collaboratively by a group of highly evolved

spirits and their earthly agents: “This is a transition period between the passing out of the Piscean Age, with its emphasis upon authority and belief, and the coming in of the Aquarian Age, with its emphasis upon individual understanding and direct knowledge” (Bailey 1968: 3). For the next fifteen years, she continued to receive communications from the Tibetan, whose identity was eventually revealed to her as Djwhal Khul, or D.K. for short. Bailey’s transcription of D.K.’s messages was eventually published in 1957 as *The Externalisation of the Hierarchy*.

For Bailey and others, as we shall see, Tibet was the hidden and inaccessible place where such spiritual beings resided in substance if not always in form. This inaccessibility was, by many writers in the movement, equated with the mythical Buddhist *śambhala*. Bailey uses the term in many places in her book. As she describes it, it is a

centre . . . for which the West has no name but which is called in the East by the name Shamballa. Perhaps the Western name is Shangri-Lha – a name which is finding recognition everywhere and which stands for a centre of happiness and purpose. Shamballa or Shangri-Lha is the place where the will of God is focussed and from which His divine purposes are directed.⁵

(Bailey 1968: 407)

Now, the progression of New Age thinking from Orage to Bailey was later advanced in 1975 by Dane Rudhyar, whose book entitled *Occult Preparations for a New Age* consciously elaborated on the ideas propagated by his predecessors. However, he consciously shifted focus from local to global transformation.⁶ Rudhyar also advocates a millenarian vision of a new and improved civilization emerging on earth through the guidance of what he terms “avatars,” or spiritually developed incarnate beings, during the age of Aquarius.⁷ These *avatāras* are collectively known as the “Trans-Himalayan Occult Brotherhood” (Rudhyar 1975: 29–48), which Robert Ellwood describes as a group of “human beings developed tremendously beyond the norm and are benign administrators of the invisible government of the word” (1979: 51). This brotherhood is none other than a grouping of the Himalayan “masters” propagated by Madame Helena Blavatsky (1831–91), the controversial founder of the Theosophical Society. It is to her that we ultimately must turn to locate the immediate roots of the contemporary New Age movement.⁸

Madame Blavatsky drew her mystical vision from a number of sources, including Hindu and Buddhist. Although she freely borrowed from traditions all over the world, her strongest leanings were toward the religions of India, since she firmly believed that the “masters” – that is, her religious teachers – resided in the Himalayas north of India. Blavatsky’s fascination with India and Tibet goes back to the days before the formation of the Theosophical Society in 1875. According to Blavatsky’s own reckoning, she first became transfixed with Eastern spiritualism in 1851, when her father took her to London to recover from her first failed marriage. While there, she spied a “princely, turbaned man” in a group of Indian and Nepali delegates visiting the British capital (Ellwood 1979: 108). The man with the turban, whom she would in later letters refer to as “The Sahib,” became her Master and is said to have instructed her to make a pilgrimage to South Asia.

According to her own account, which remains unverified, Blavatsky traveled to India and Tibet some time between 1851 and 1871 to acquire occult training.⁹ Shortly

after this long and mysterious period *in absentia*, she resurfaced in America in 1873, where she met Colonel Henry Steel Olcott (1832–1907) the following year.¹⁰ Together, they formed the Theosophical Society in 1875 as an institution for combining, among other things, Mayan lore, ancient Egyptian mysticism, Tibetan philosophy, and myths about Atlantis into one seemingly coherent whole. Although the image of Tibet and vague references to Tibetan spiritual culture occasionally appear in Blavatsky's voluminous writings, it could be argued that Tibetan thought played a lesser role in her metaphysical system than the many other teachings to which she had better access. For instance, Blavatsky's magnum opus *Isis Unveiled*, first published in 1877, contains very little on Tibet, except for a few possibly plagiarized lines from the travel accounts of Abbé Huc (Ellwood 1979: 122; Huc 1928). Nonetheless, Blavatsky's theosophical lodge in New York was fondly referred to by her followers as "The Lamasery" (Ellwood 1979: 117; Olcott 1895: 331–32), a clear attempt to link Theosophy with the Tibetan clerical system.

These sorts of intentional "borrowings" may seem insignificant on one level of analysis, but they also suggest that the idea of Tibet was, in fact, firmly planted in the imaginations of these early New Age pioneers. Tibet became, for various reasons to be discussed in my conclusion, a trope for New Age practitioners during this seminal phase of development. Characteristic of the transparent usage of Tibet as a convenient image for fragmentary alternative thinking by New Age pioneers was the association of things Tibetan with non-Tibetan things. Perhaps the most understudied text to exemplify this point is Pilangi Dasa's (alias Herman Vetterling [1849–1931]) *Swedenborg the Buddhist, or The Higher Swedenborgianism: Its Secrets and Thibetan Origin*, published by the Buddhistic Swedenborgian Brotherhood in Los Angeles during 1887.

In the foreword, Dasa states that Emanuel Swedenborg (1688–1772), the Swedish philosopher-cum-mystic "is one moment a Christian, another, a Materialist, and a third, a Buddhist. Now and then a mixture of these. In reality, that is, at heart, he is a Buddhist" (1887: 7).¹¹ He further encourages us to

read, if you have time, patience, and courage, and in the light of Buddhism, esoteric and exoteric, the theological writings of Swedenborg, and you will learn a few facts worth knowing, namely . . . , that hidden under Judaic-Christian names, phrases, and symbols, and scattered throughout dreary, dogmatic, and soporific octavos, are pure precious, blessed truths of Buddhism.

(Dasa 1887: 9–10)

The strange thing about this tract is that there are virtually no references to Tibet until the very end of a 317-page monograph. Again, as did Blavatsky, the author relies on Huc's accounts of the Tibetan brand of Buddhism to develop an alien aura around the Swedish mystic.

Vetterling was one of the first Americans to embrace Buddhism officially. He converted in 1884 and took the name Pilangi Dasa. Thereafter, he somewhat dogmatically propagated Buddhism, without specific reference to Tibet, in the journal he founded in 1888 titled *The Buddhist Ray*. But *Swedenborg the Buddhist* was his most outrageous treatise, creating in a fictional and dream-like fashion an astrally projected dialogue between Swedenborg, a Brāhmaṇa, a Buddhist monk, a Parsee, an Aztec Indian, an Icelander, an anonymous woman, and himself. Due to his eclectic combination of

Swedenborgianism, homeopathy, Theosophy, Spiritualism, and whatever else suited his fancy, many scholars during his lifetime questioned his authenticity as a “real” Buddhist. This is ironic, given the fact that Dasa wrote in 1889 of “the hysteric women, weak-minded men, and plagiarists that have formed the ‘aryan’-‘buddhist’-astrologic cliques of Boston” (Tweed 1994: 41). Dasa remained adamant about his brand of esoteric and eclectic Buddhism, insisting that he was part of a spiritual lineage that directly connected him with the teachings of so-called Lamaism. As he wrote in the first issue of *The Buddhist Ray* in 1888, “It will set forth the teachings imparted by the Mongolian Buddhists to Emanuel Swedenborg” (cited in Tweed 1992: 61).¹²

Late nineteenth-century ideas concerning Buddhism may seem naive, quaint, and even comical to us now, but Dasa, Blavatsky, and her aforementioned successor Bailey were all spiritually experimenting and writing during a time when there was not much organized non-Western religion in the United States (Carter 1971: 202), making it extremely difficult for them to practice or preach the orthodox tenets of any specific Eastern religious tradition. Nonetheless, the attempts to incorporate Buddhism into their idiosyncratic systems of thought suggest a heartfelt need to utilize the teachings of the Buddha in developing alternative spiritual paths for the West.

All of the early instances recounted above hint at a keen interest in the image of Tibet – imagined or real – among people who can be said to be the forerunners of the New Age movement in America. Yet even though their enthusiasm was great, their actual knowledge about Tibet and its spiritual culture was severely limited. While it is true that academic knowledge of Buddhist Philosophy grew after the 1844 publication of Eugène Burnouf’s (1801–52) first scholarly introduction to Buddhism in a European language, much less was known about the Tibetan variety of the religion during the lifetimes of Blavatsky and her cohorts. Most of what was known about Tibet was culled from travelers’ accounts, which were then utilized by literary figures to essentialize further the mysterious and magical nature of that isolated land.¹³ It is significant to keep in mind, however, that Tibet was beginning to emerge in the late nineteenth century as a romantic landscape (Bishop 1989: 97–135) to fuel Western fantasies of a utopian stronghold in the midst of a politicized, colonial vision of Central Asia (Richards 1992). Moreover, Tibet concurrently became a complex symbol for Eastern mysticism in general, and Buddhism as a generic, homogeneous entity in particular.

It is precisely through Buddhism that Tibet makes its entry into the American context after the turn of the present century. It is Buddhism also that attracts many Americans into alternative religious practice at this critical juncture, for it provided a distinctive foreign “intellectual landscape” (Tweed 1992: xxii, 78–110) for the development of a socioreligious critique of American society based on dissent, which later re-emerges as a major reason for a return to the East by contemporary New Agers. In fact, Buddhism was, according to Thomas Tweed (1992: 27), the most popular Eastern religion by 1894. We therefore must consider the development of Buddhism in America as an important aspect of the emergence of the modern New Age movement.

Buddhism in America

The precursors to contemporary New Age thought just discussed lived during a critical time in American social history termed the Gilded Age by historians. Paul Carter (1971: 220) has convincingly argued that this period (1865–95) set the stage for a spiritual

crisis in the American psyche due to the skepticism, rationalism, and scientism brought about by a clash of faith and science. It was also a time when Protestant missionaries from America branched out into Asia and encountered Buddhism in reality.¹⁴ As a result of their encounters, the missionaries developed an ambiguous dual sense of compassion and condescension towards Eastern religions which was similar to attitudes pertaining to Native Americans around the same time (Carter 1971: 202).

The combined perception of the “Other” as being simultaneously inferior and fascinating needed to be related and compared to something “closer to home” in order to make the alien familiar.¹⁵ It is, thus, not surprising that Buddhism was aligned with Catholicism by many Protestant theologians and intellectuals. More specifically, Tibetan Buddhism was often noted for its parallels with Roman Catholicism.¹⁶ The infallibility of the Pope and the Dally Lama, the image of tonsured and celibate monks, and the miraculous births of Christ and the Buddha combined with ritualistic dimensions of worship, such as the use of rosaries, the veneration of images and relics, sounding bells, burning incense, and sprinkling holy water in both religions, all provided a powerful rhetorical device for Protestants, allowing them to make the case that “the Catholic Church [was] an occidental copy of Eastern Lamaism” (Carter 1971: 207). Catholics, of course, were quick to respond by denouncing Buddhism in the same way that Protestants often denounced Catholicism. For example, one polemicist, comparing Zoroastrians and Buddhism with Catholicism stated:

It must be premised that all of these systems [the Eastern religions] embody portions of the primitive traditions of the race, and are so far true and similar to the Catholic religion; but, on the other hand, they have two great evils, apart from the crowning one of their very existence outside the church’s pale: first, the divine traditions are only partially retained, and are often so distorted and corrupted as to be nearly unrecognizable; and, second, their special claims have little or no logical foundation, and utterly vanish under a rigid application of the laws of evidence.¹⁷

(Sneer 1888: 451)

Such pejorative comparisons for the negation of specific religions later came to serve a completely different comparative function; namely, to allow spiritual seekers the opportunity to legitimize their practice of one or more faiths at the same time. In other words, rather than using comparison to point out difference, comparison came to be used as a tool for demonstrating the commonality of religions.

The universalizing point of the mystical oneness of all religions served New Age communities well, as it did its precursors in the Theosophical Society. In addition to Theosophy’s unprecedented influence in the shaping of American attitudes concerning the syncretistic nature of mysticism (Tweed 1992: 30), the event that most shaped the climate of religious tolerance and comparatives in the Gilded Age was the 1893 World’s Parliament of Religions in Chicago (cf. Seager 1995). Writing about the event a decade later, Shailer Mathews noted that “Whatever else the Parliament may have accomplished, it developed respect for non-Christian religion on the part of intelligent religious persons” (cited in Carter 1971: 215).¹⁸

The gathering brought together spokesmen representing many Asian faiths, and a number of Buddhist theologians from both the Mahāyāna (Japan) and Theravāda

(Sri Lanka) traditions were among them. A few years after the Parliament, the American chapter of the Maha Bodhi Society was founded in 1897 for the propagation of Buddhism. These landmark events, along with the continued publication of Dasa's *The Buddhist Ray* and the philosopher of science Paul Carus' (1852–1919) two periodicals, *The Open Court* and *The Monist*, provided an important stimulus for the growth of Buddhism in the United States. In 1904 Carus, a German immigrant, went so far as to state in *The Open Court* that "*Ex oriente lux* is an old famous phrase which states the truth that our civilization and religion came from the East" (cited in Jackson 1968: 79).

Extreme polemics in favor of Buddhism had the overall effect of temporarily offering Americans the possibility of "turning east" (Cox 1977) to search for new religious insights to explain the decline of spirituality in Judeo-Christian traditions after the onslaught of science. This initial fervor for the Orient in general and Buddhism in particular grew for approximately a decade after the Parliament (Jackson 1968: 75; Tweed 1992: 26), but waned around 1907. It is no wonder, then, that one scholar estimates there were between two to three thousand Euro-Americans who considered themselves to be primarily or secondarily Buddhists and tens of thousands more who were sympathizers (Tweed 1992: 46) between these critical years. During this period Tibet and its varieties of Buddhism, however, were still only a far-off set of images that would not come to real fruition in America until much later.

At the same time that some Americans were embracing Buddhism, many simply grafted consciously selected Buddhist principles onto other beliefs and practices, a trend which, as I have already noted, characterizes New Age thinking in general. As Tweed states, "[M]any Caucasian Buddhist followers combined traditional Buddhist doctrines with beliefs derived from Western sources" (1992: 40). Even before the Parliament, this trend was already becoming quite established. In an editorial titled "The Intermingling of Religions," Lydia Child discussed what she termed the Eclectic church, which would be an amalgam of the world's great religious traditions. With reference to this new religion as both structure and institution, she romantically forecasted the following:

We shall not live to see it; but we may be certain that, according to the laws of spiritual growth, it will retain a likeness to all the present, as the present does to the past. But it will stand on a higher plane, be larger in its proportions, and more harmonious in its beauty . . . [It] shall gather forms of holy aspiration from all ages and nations, and set them on high in their immortal beauty, with the sunlight of heaven to glorify them all.

(1871: 395)

This statement foreshadows the blend of religious ideas that would later be propagated by a host of New Age thinkers from the 1960s onward.¹⁹

The decline of Buddhism and the rise of eclecticism

According to Tweed's recent study (1992: 157–62), a decrease in active participation in Buddhist practice in the United States occurred around 1912 or 1913 due to the demise of Victorian culture's dominance in American life. This is not to say that Buddhism simply disappeared in the American context, and with it Tibet, for the

influential journal, *The Eastern Buddhist*, began publication in 1921, and the romance with Shangri-La continued in the 1930s with the popularity of James Hilton's novel *Lost Horizon* (1933) and its subsequent film adaptation by Frank Capra in 1937.²⁰ During these same two decades, a gradual institutionalization of various non-Tibetan schools of Buddhism began to occur in the United States. However, the dialogue about Buddhism within Protestant intellectual circles became less important as religious pluralism and religious experimentation gained increasing prominence during the years between 1920–60, when bohemian styles of living gave way to hippiedom (Fields 1992: 195–272). So while Buddhism slowly began to acculturate to American lifeways, new forms of alternative religious practices gained ascendancy.

The initial decline of interest in Buddhism and other Eastern religions a decade or so after the Parliament led to a continued attempt on the part of alternative spiritualists to combine ideas from numerous paths into what Ellwood has termed “emergent” religion (1979: 5). In addition to being individualistic and eclectic, emergent religion is characterized by certain “key symbols” (Ortner 1973) culled from Eastern religions, such as meditation and monism, as well as an orientation toward distant and exotic cultures (Ellwood 1979: 21). G. Hegel (1770–1831), who was himself fascinated by Eastern cultures (cf. Halbfass 1988: 84–99), had already noted the strong attraction that such “otherness” had on the Western mind when he stated in 1809 that “Inherent in the strange and remote is a powerful interest, . . . the attractiveness of which is in inverse proportion to its familiarity” (cited in Ellwood 1979: 20).

Indeed, alternative thinkers, themselves marginalized and alienated from mainstream religious thought, sought out the remote and the distant as a way of connecting with something completely different and beyond the normative worldview of their own culture. This “difference” labels not only “imagined” places like Tibet but also the individuals who identify with it. People like Blavatsky, Olcott, and Bailey certainly perceived themselves as different, exploiting their liminal status to exoticize their eclectic brand of teachings. Difference then is what alternative seekers searched for in their attempts to blend numerous religious paths into one harmonious and glorious metaphysical vision.

As Asia gradually became more known to the West during the era of the World Wars, and as popular academics, such as Carl Jung (e.g., 1978; cf. also Bishop 1984; Gómez 1995), Heinrich Zimmer (e.g., 1926; cf. also Case 1994), Mircea Eliade (e.g., 1969; cf. also Korom 1992), and Joseph Campbell (e.g., 1949, 1962), advanced the New Age cause by familiarizing the West with the East and advocating the underlying unity of mystical experience in their comparative studies of archetypes, a new era of “imagining” Eastern thought ensued, both on the popular and academic levels (cf. Lopez 1995: 263–88). By 1965, when the U.S. Immigration Act abolished the national origins quota system (Tweed 1992: 158), many varieties of Buddhism were firmly established in America (cf. Prebish 1979), including, of course, the Tibetan varieties (cf. Greenfield 1975: 212–33; Prebish 1979: 121–55). With the arrival of Geshe Wangyal in 1955 (Cutler 1995: xxvi), Tarthang Tulku in 1968 (Fields 1992: 304–8, 312–16), Chögyam Trungpa in 1970 (Fields 1992: 308–12, 316–18), and Lobsang Lhalungpa in 1971 (*Parabola* 1978: 44), to name just a few of the better known teachers, Tibetan Buddhism had arrived permanently in America. Today there are 184 Tibetan centers for learning and meditation in North America (Morreale 1988: 222–87). This notwithstanding, one needs to ask to what degree people were seriously practicing Buddhism.

Certainly there were those who took their practice to heart. One psychological study, for example, suggests that some Americans in the modern period have turned to Asian meditation practices for the most part to enhance religious experience through rigorous practice (Gussner and Berkowitz 1988) and the personalization of ritual (Stone 1978).²¹ But there were also those during the 1960s and 1970s who were floating in what Robert Greenfield (1975) has termed “the spiritual supermarket,” shopping for all sorts of alternative religious experiences (cf. also Ellwood 1996). A great number of the people that I interviewed in 1987 as part of a project on conversion to Eastern religions in America during the sixties (cf. Korom n.d.c) narrated their diverse experiments with everything ranging from meditation (Zen) and chanting (ISKCON and Soka Gakkai) to ritualistic sex (Rajneesh) and drug use (Leary to Castaneda). Many of them spent a long period simply picking and choosing those ideas and practices that seemed appropriate to their lifestyle.

The period in question was, of course, a period of social ferment, a time of establishing a counterculture (cf. Roszak 1969) in opposition to mainstream American thought and practice. Eastern mysticism, combined with Native American spirituality²² and a host of other practices coming together under the general rubric of the New Age, provided an alternative and radical context to suit the emerging needs of New Age thinkers and practitioners. Yet, as Antonio Gramsci (1957) and Herbert Marcuse (1964) both predicted, subversive ideologies disseminated by small, marginalized groups are often reincorporated into the dominant culture’s contextual framework over time in a repackaged form suitable for mass consumption.²³

Conclusion

Tibet was an important part of the alternative and liberal context that allowed American youths to create new modes of worship and belief by drawing heavily on Eastern orthopraxy. While Tibet and its religious culture remained incipient during the seminal development of New Age thinking, the country certainly served as a backdrop for many of the major thinkers in the various movements discussed at the outset. This could be so because of its relatively mysterious nature, which in itself developed partly as a by-product of Western fantasy, a point made repeatedly by Peter Bishop in his study *The Myth of Shangri-La* (1989). When Tibet came into the public eye in the 1960s as a result of the Tibetan diaspora (cf. Korom n.d. a–b), however, its culture and religion were embraced by more and more Westerners due, in part, to an increasing number of Tibetan teachers settling in European and American countries. Again, many people who embraced Tibetan Buddhism did so seriously, but others experimented with it along with many other paths of knowledge.²⁴

Such a tendency can be devastating, and criticisms similar to the ones made by Buddhologists in the nineteenth century concerning the “authenticity” of American Buddhist practitioners are echoed today. In a 1978 interview in the quasi-New Age magazine, *Parabola*, the Tibetan scholar Lobsang Lhalungpa noted that many Western students of Tibetan Buddhism do not go deep enough into the tradition. He stated,

I think that people who wish for exciting experiences have a tendency to explore without going deeper into the disciplines. So they never gain any real experiences in the first place, simply because they have not given enough

devotion. . . . I have known quite a few people who thought that by reading certain esoteric books they had sufficient understanding to do these practices on their own; and finally it created serious psychological problems. . . . We very often say: There is no use giving a child a wild horse if he isn't trained to ride.

(*Parabola* 1978: 47)

Proverbial Tibetan wisdom castigates those who do not choose to practice wholeheartedly, but people have continued to dabble in Tibetan Buddhism into the current decade.

Mass media has certainly played a role in simultaneously popularizing and trivializing Tibet. More importantly, however, the continued and perceived exotic appeal of Tibetan wisdom traditions even today has allowed contemporary New Age practitioners to partake of Tibet without fully committing to its rigorous spiritual training. Moreover, the futuristic vision of a better world to come crosscuts many religious paths. Sympathetic American scholars and practitioners have pointed out repeatedly that Tibetan Buddhism carries a millenarian message for all of humankind in the Kālacakra prophecy of the coming of Śambhala (Jack 1977: 70; Thurman 1985).²⁵ This same idea, as I have already mentioned, runs deep in the thought of the forerunners of New Age thinking and continues to play a significant role in the way that Tibet is marketed today within New Age communities.²⁶ Wearing a *rdo-rje* necklace, prayer wheel earrings, or a so-called Tibetan shaman's jacket (cf. Kamenetz 1996: 49)²⁷ allows the individual to be sympathetic to the Tibetan tradition in a postmodern fashion, but also safeguards her against any deeper engagement with the contemporary issues that Tibet, its people, and its culture are facing on a daily basis.²⁸ As a result, the Tibetan Buddhist Śambhala becomes confused with the Western-inspired Shangri-La.

In a recent study devoted to the commodification of indigenous cultural products and learning, Deborah Root has characterized the New Age trend of appropriation as one that "saps and distorts the strength of the culture under siege" (1996: 96). She goes on to discuss such appropriation as one of necrophiliac behavior, which is closely in line with the much-maligned salvage paradigm (cf. Clifford 1989; Marcus and Fisher 1986: 24 ff.) in anthropology:

Like the manufacturer of souvenirs who summarily utilizes Native designs, the person who attempts to appropriate spirituality imagines Native cultures as something dead and gone. In this way, the desire to appropriate and to usurp meaning from another cultural tradition is not just romanticized nostalgia for supposedly dead cultures but can also be a way of marking death and conquest and doing so on the bodies and communities of living people.²⁹

(Root 1996: 96)

Bharati, in his usually sardonic way, has also criticized the Western reception of the image of Tibet among New Age seekers, calling it a "fictitious Tibet," the "somewhat auto-erotic credo of a large, and unfortunately still growing, crowd of wide-eyed believers in the mysterious East" (1974: 1). It is not necessary to go so far as to agree

with Bharati that the whole cultural construction of Tibet is fraudulent, but it is important to place the fragmented production and reception of Tibet in the New Age movement in some sort of contextual perspective. Tibet's role in the New Age movement must be understood not in isolation from other aspects of Eastern culture, but as an integral part of a larger complex of ideas that freely and often loosely circulated within communities looking for alternative epistemologies.

I suggest that Tibet, while historically playing a lesser role than countries such as India, China, or Japan in the New Age imaginaire, served as an important metaphysical trope for the construction of an alternative spirituality in New Age thought. Moreover, its long history in Western literature, philosophy, and politics allowed Tibet to assume a prestigious role in the making of an appropriate "geography of utopia" (Porter and Lukerman 1976).³⁰ Its close geographic proximity with India, and its philosophical connection with Buddhism, placed it at the cognitive center of New Age imaginings, yet its misperceived isolation conveniently served to preserve the aura of distance and mystery needed for the placement of inaccessible spiritual masters and esoteric teachings. In this capacity, Tibet's role as an essentialized sacred space vaguely located on the mythic New Age landscape can be seen as a functional necessity for the overall development of New Age thought. But we must also be aware, as Donald Lopez (1994) reminds us, of the "New Age orientalism" inherent in the ongoing production of a fantastic Tibet, for it denies agency to real Tibetans and erases Tibet from any physical map.

Lastly, let me close by turning to a contemporary New Age practitioner who in this connection told me recently that the need for a real Tibet is secondary to the "astral" Tibet because it is on the ethereal plane that the Masters reside. So if we can simply communicate with them through "channeling" (mental/spiritual communication), the need for the physical realm is insignificant in the big cosmic picture. I do not wish to suggest pejoratively, however, that the total New Age involvement with Tibetan culture has been unproductive, for a number of practitioners fitting this category have been involved in the process of raising awareness about the current issues pertaining to the future of modern Tibet. In this sense, New Age thinking and practice can make useful contributions to confronting and possibly solving contemporary social problems (cf. Woodside 1989). With people on the fringe, such as the one quoted above, still advocating the "ethereal" approach to Tibetan culture, however, there remains an ongoing need to distinguish between Shangri-La and Śambhala.³¹

Notes

* An earlier version of this paper was presented in Bonn at the Mythos Tibet Symposium, Kunst-und Ausstellungshalle der Bundesrepublik Deutschland, May 11, 1996. The proceedings of that Conference will contain a shorter and slightly different version of the above entitled "Tibet und die New Age Bewegung." I thank Detlef Kantowsky, Per Kvaerne, Donald S. Lopez, Jr., and Meg McLagan for their insightful comments on earlier drafts. However, all errors, factual or otherwise, are strictly my own.

1 Produced in California and marketed via the internet by the Creston Brewing Company, the beer is called Deadhead Draft. It serves as the official drink of the Grateful Dead fan club. Mickey Hart, the drummer of the band, has been influential also in spreading Tibetan spiritual culture in the popular realm through the use of music. I shall have more to say about this below (cf. n. 29).

- 2 Coincidentally, Hollywood celebrated their own “Year of Tibet” (cf. McLagan n.d.) in 1996. Three new and very different films are in the works. One deals with the early life of the present Dalai Lama, another is about the exploits of the Austrian explorer and climber Heinrich Harrer during his seven year sojourn in Tibet, and lastly, a film starring martial arts hero Steven Seagal about the C.I.A. funding and training of Tibetan rebels during the early days of the Chinese occupation of Tibet (see Shoumatoff 1996: 100).
- 3 Some, such as Carl Raschke (1988), place it in the 1980s. But, in fact, the majority of researchers are in agreement that the New Age is not very new at all, in the sense that it replicates trends of religious pluralism that have been present in Western society for many centuries (cf. Olds 1989). For the most forceful position statements in this regard, see Robert Ellwood (1992) and Wouter Hanegraaff (1996). The latter even argues that it is a pattern that goes back to the European Renaissance.
- 4 Although it is of no major consequence to the following argument, it is interesting to note that Gurdjieff himself may have visited Tibet just after the turn of the present century. While it is not certain, it is popularly held that Gurdjieff may have been a chief player in the “great game,” acting as the principal Russian agent in Tibet to allay Chinese and British incursions (see Time-Life Books 1990: 107). Colin Wilson (1986: 35), based on Gurdjieff’s own account in *Life is Real Only Then, When “I Am”* (1975), places him in the town of Yangihissar on the edge of the Gobi Desert in 1902.
- 5 For all of her sympathies in favor of “Eastern” thought, Bailey was primarily interested in Christianity, as is apparent in her constant return to Christ as the sole center of mystical oneness. Concerning the above passage, for example, she even claims that there is biblical evidence for the existence of Śambhala:

At moments of crisis in the earthly life of Christ we read that a Voice spoke to Him, affirming His Sonship and setting the seal of approval upon His acts and work. At that moment a great fusion of two spiritual centres – the Hierarchy and Shamballa was brought about, and thus spiritual energy was released on Earth.
(Bailey 1968: 407–8)

- 6 Rudhyar’s book largely paved the way for Marilyn Ferguson’s widely read classic in this genre titled *The Aquarian Conspiracy* (1980).
- 7 Rudhyar also draws on Śambhala as a place of habitation for these masters: “This is a ‘place’ where the ‘pattern of Man,’ at whose center the inextinguishable Flame of the divine creative mind burns, is to be found” (1975: 22). But the mythical Buddhist paradise does not have to be physical, according to Rudhyar, for

If Central Asia is the Heartland of *our* present human world – as the English and German geopoliticians of the period between the two World Wars claimed – then Shamballah may well be located in the Gobi Desert. But if so, it almost certainly does not have what we call a “physical” existence – unless we extend the term “physical” to include what is usually called “etheric”.
(1975: 22; emphasis in original)

For a more serious study of the textual sources pertaining to the actual location of the fabled land, see C. Damdinsüren (1977); for an ethnographic account of real searches conducted by Tibetans in times of crisis, see also Martin Brauen-Dolma (1985).

- 8 For a more extensive treatment of the relationship between Blavatsky’s Theosophy and Tibet, see Poul Pederson (1996).
- 9 This is confirmed in the objectively questionable but subjectively informative *Mahatma Letters to A. P. Sinnett*, in which it is communicated about Madame Blavatsky that “This state of hers is intimately connected with her occult training in Tibet” (cited in Rudhyar 1975: 31–32). Rudhyar, acting as her New Age apologist, later goes on to state that Blavatsky was simply a European *body* selected by the Masters in the “Tibetan Himalayas” to act as a receptacle into which energy would be funneled so that she could serve as a connecting link between East and West:

These powers later on had to be brought under conscious training during her stay in Tibet, if not before, because she had first to deal with society and culture in which the only wide open door to anything beyond physical matter was the spiritualistic movement.

(1975: 35)

- 10 Olcott's *Old Diary Leaves* (1895) is still one of our major sources on Madame Blavatsky (cf. Prothero 1996).
- 11 Swedenborg's life and thought have been much maligned in the past, and many have simply written him off as a madman. For a positive re-evaluation, however, see Olof Lagerkrantz (1996), in which he argues that the mystic's work needs to be understood as poetic allegory drawing on the "science of correspondence" to provide a visionary dual understanding of the nature of man and the universe, not necessarily the rantings of a madman. I thank Jan Magnusson for bringing this reference to my attention.
- 12 Here, as was often the case in such early attempts at religious fusion (e.g., n. 4 and n. 7 above), Mongolia and Tibet become confused, if not completely merged.
- 13 Writers such as Rudyard Kipling ([1865–1936], 1911), Gustav Meyrink ([1868–1932], 1913), and later Pearl S. Buck ([1892–1973], 1970) would draw on the mystery and exotic nature of Tibet and the Himalayas for their own creative, and often politically loaded, purposes. On Kipling's colonialism in *Kim*, see Gyan Prakash (1992: 153–55). For a treatment of the image of Tibet in popular literature, see Peter Bishop [1989] and David Templeman (n.d.).
- 14 For a recent assessment of this encounter and its contemporary ramifications through an analysis of Hans Urs von Balthasar's writings, see Raymond Gawronski (1996).
- 15 On the construction of the Other in anthropology and literature, see Johannes Fabian (1983) and Michel de Certeau (1986), respectively. Ina-Maria Greverus (1995) reverses the equation by exploring how the self is constructed reflexively in the light of the Other by anthropologists.
- 16 Donald Lopez [1997] notes that Buddhologists of the time were also making the same comparisons. Citing Thomas Rhys Davids of the Pali Text Society, for example, we read: "The development of Buddhist doctrine which has taken place in . . . Tibet is . . . very valuable from the similarity it bears to the development which has taken place in Christianity in the Roman Catholic countries."
- 17 For an extended discussion of a portion of this passage in its proper social context, see Carter (1971: 201–4).
- 18 For a provocative refiguring of the 1893 Parliament, see Eric Ziolkowski (1993), in which he argues that the event was not as radical and fraternal as commentators have made it out to be; instead, it was simply the crowning glory of a "concurrent maverick theme of religious tolerance that had been emergent in Western literature since the Middle Ages" (44). Ironically enough, this spirit of tolerance was juxtaposed with the broader, less tolerant, context of the World's Columbian Exposition of 1893 (see Rydell 1978).
- 19 Romanticism in general has been implicated historically in the emergence of the New Age, as Hans Sebald (1984) argues. For pitfalls in Sebald's argument, however, see James Lewis (1992: 9–11).
- 20 After many years of contestation, the long-awaited sequel to Hilton's novel has finally been released. The California-based writing duo Eleanor Clooney and Daniel Altieri have brought out *Shangri-La: The Return to the World of Lost Horizon* (1996); for the background, see Connie Lauerman (1996).
- 21 For a fresh philosophical perspective on the epistemological reasons for the Western appropriation of Buddhist practice, see Michael McGhee (1995). Steven Hendlin (1983), however, warns that what might seem like rigorousness on the surface of New Age ritual is simply pernicious practice that could, from a clinical point of view, be harmful psychologically.
- 22 Although some (cf. Hawken 1976) have attempted to claim that North America was discovered by Buddhists, there is no conclusive evidence (e.g., cf., Greenberg, Turner, and Zegura 1986) of any close relationship between Sino-Tibetans and Native Americans, even though Robert Shafer (1952, 1957, 1969) did present some controversial evidence for an association between Athapascan and Sino-Tibetan more than forty years ago (for a recent

and critical assessment of Sino-Tibetan linguistics, see Matisoff 1991). Nonetheless, the belief of a spiritual tie between Native Americans (particularly the southwestern cultures, such as the Navajo and Hopi) and Tibetans is one that persists today in the New Age way of thinking (e.g., Gold 1994). This trend has been fueled not only by populist literature but also by speculative anthropological excursions, such as Victor Mansfield (1981) and Chien Chiao (1982). For a convincing critique of earlier studies of such “alleged diffusion,” see Balaji Mundkar (1978). The belief in some sort of mystical connection between Tibetans and Native Americans goes so deep as to have attracted the current Dally Lama’s attention during a trip to New Mexico in April of 1991, at which time he met with tribal leaders to state that Tibetan and Native American cultures have much in common (cf. Roybal 1993). I cannot deal with this topic at length here, but an analysis is forthcoming in an article to be titled “From the Eclectic to the Electric Church: On the Imagined Connection between Native America and Tibet.”

- 23 The economic dimension of the New Age’s appeal has yet to be explored fully. For some preliminary thoughts on the topic, however, see Carl Raschke (1988).
- 24 Such experimentation has even led to the co-option of the Tibetan tradition of dream therapy and interpretation (see Young 1996). Tibetan medicine has also been popularized by the New Age concern for holistic health care, as the recent book by Robert Sachs (1995) demonstrates.
- 25 The concept of millenarianism, which is also referred to by other terms such as “messianism” (Lanternari 1962), “chiliasm” (Mühlmann 1961), and “revitalization movements” (Wallace 1956), is not simply a phenomenon associated with the Christian millennial vision, for it occurs in many societies as a result of radical cultural change often due to colonialism. It therefore is an excellent phenomenon for comparative study, as the essays in Sylvia Thrupp (1962) suggest. For masterful studies, see Kenelm Burridge (1969) and Peter Worsley (1968). In the Tibetan context specifically, see the important article by Brauen-Dolma (1985), in which he suggestively ties the concept of Tibetan millenarianism to the social and psychological disruption caused by exile.
- 26 It is also the case, however, that Tibetans themselves have engaged in selling their culture as a result of the diaspora (see Garson 1993).
- 27 Other articles of clothing inspired by Tibet include a yak herder’s vest (*Daily Planet* 1996: 34) and a *yantra* patch vest (*Lark Books* 1996: 10). The latter perpetuates the romanticization of Tibet by describing the product as “Inspired by the ancient culture of Tibet – that miles-high land of snow-capped mountains, distant bells, monks, and mystery.”
- 28 Here is where the counterculture movement fails in a sense. As Norman Klein suggests, the youth rebellion of the 1960s in America and Europe led to a hegemonic domestication by the establishment of a “variety of forms of protest into its own ideological network” (1969: 313). Popular journalism such as Fred Ward (1980) writing under the aegis of the *National Geographic*, often reinforces aloof attitudes by simply smoothing over controversial issues to reflect the current thinking of editors and the dominant forces that be. For a powerful and productive critique of *National Geographic*’s rhetoric and function in middle-class American society, see Catherine Lutz and Jane Collins (1993).
- 29 The (mis)appropriation of Tibetan culture is not just one-sided, however, for, as I have argued elsewhere (Korom n.d.a-b), Tibetans often exploit the romanticized image of their homeland for their own purposes in a process James Carrier (1992, 1995) has termed “occidentalism”; that is, the reverse of Edward Said’s “orientalism” (1978), in which colonized nations create their own images of the West, just as European colonisers fabricated the East. The process is not, however, a dichotomous one, for mutual cross-fertilization of cultural ideas occurs continuously. In the realm of music, for example, at the same time that Western musicians are turning to Tibetan Buddhism for inspiration (cf. Ehrlich 1995), Tibetan musicians turn to the West. This is most apparent in the compositions of flute player Nawang Khechog, who has utilized New Age fusion for his own creative purposes (cf. Snow Lion Publications 1994: 1, 1996: 25). Music, of course, is used politically as well by drawing on the notion of freedom. For example, a recent cassette by Tibetan singer Tsering Wangmo is titled “Echoes of Tibet: Traditional Tibetan Songs of Peace, Beauty and Freedom” (cf. Snow Lion 1996: 25) and a Micky Hart production by the Gyuto Monks

goes by the title of "Freedom Chants from the Roof of the World" (cf. *Rykodisc* 1995: 30). On New Age music in general, see Leslie Berman (1988).

- 30 Here, it would be useful once again to remember that the quest for earthly paradises is a theme that runs through the whole of humankind's religious history (cf. Genovese 1983), but nonetheless remains specific to the particular situations of each culture that nurtures such soteriological and eschatological aspirations.
- 31 E. Sullivan (1983: 33) points out the important distinction between the Greek *ou topia* (no place) and *eu topia* (good place) in the work of Sir Thomas More. While both Shangri-La and Śambhala are mentalscapes, I would draw attention to Shangri-La as an *ou topia* and Śambhala as a *eu topia*.

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